

MAO AND HISTORY: AN INTERPRETIVE ESSAY ON SOME
PROBLEMS IN MAO ZEDONG'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at
The School of Oriental and African Studies
The University of London
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December 1982

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses four problem areas in Mao Zedong's philosophy of history. Firstly, it provides an analysis of the way in which Mao perceived causation operating in social and historical terms. Secondly, the problem of historical time and the future is examined; this involves an examination of the forms of historical periodization utilized by Mao, and his vision of the future of society. Thirdly, a brief analysis is provided of an important element of Mao's philosophy of science, the manner in which he approached the formulation of laws of society and history. Fourthly, an interpretation is offered of Mao's "Sinification of Marxism"; the way in which Mao could espouse a "universal" theory of history, and insist on its integration with Chinese national particularities without detracting from the universality of that theory. An attempt has also been made to determine the relationship between these different elements of Mao's philosophy of history.

The study is based on and employs several methodological devices. The first of these is the utilization of an exegetical approach; consequently, the analysis offered limits itself to a close textual study and interpretation of the Mao documents. Secondly, the study has adopted a periodization which divides the development of Mao's thought into six periods, four of which are subjected to analysis: (1) The Yan'an period, 1936-45; (2) the period of Civil War and Consolidation, 1946-54; (3) the post-Cooperativization period, 1955-64; and (4) the Cultural Revolution, 1965-69. The study concentrates on the Yan'an and post-Cooperativization periods. While these two methodological procedures guide and structure the study, the content of the study in turn serves as a test of their utility and validity.

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1. "Mao Zedong's <u>On Contradiction</u> and <u>On Practice</u> : Pre-Liberation Texts", <u>China Quarterly</u> 84 (December 1980), pp. 641-668.	
2. "Mao Zedong's <u>On Contradiction</u> : An Annotated Translation of the Pre-Liberation Text", <u>Griffith</u> <u>Asian Papers</u> , No. 3 (Nathan: School of Modern Asian Studies, Griffith University, 1981).	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research and writing of a doctoral thesis can be a long, and at times lonely, business. The support and encouragement of the student's supervisor, colleagues and friends can consequently become a critical factor in its completion.

I would like firstly to extend my gratitude to Dr. C.L. Chiou of the University of Queensland who first revealed to me the challenge and rewards of studying Chinese politics, and who gave consistent encouragement to my subsequent studies. My deep appreciation also goes to my supervisor Professor Stuart Schram of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Professor Schram provided invaluable advice and assistance at many stages of the research and writing; in particular, his close attention to detail and generous and constructive criticism deserve mention and acknowledgement. George Weys, also of S.O.A.S., provided badly-needed assistance with some translations from the Chinese. My thanks to Ms. Kathy Lay, for her translations from French works on Mao. My appreciation also goes to Michael Dutton of Griffith University for the many intellectually stimulating discussions which forced me to clarify my position on a number of important theoretical problems.

In terms of material support, I am pleased to acknowledge the kindness extended by my good friend Dr. John Mahony. Similarly, to Tom and Dora Knight, who came to my financial rescue at a particularly difficult time, many thanks.

My thanks and appreciation also go to Mrs Sue Esdale for her meticulous care in typing the manuscript. Her gracious and cheerful

attitude is a tonic for anyone lucky enough to work with her.

The final word of gratitude is reserved for my dear friend Jill Kenny. Without her unflagging love and support during a difficult period, this thesis would never have reached completion. This thesis is affectionately dedicated to her.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BZF I Mao Zedong, Bianzhengfa weiwu lun (Dialectical Materialism) (Dalien: Da-zhong shu-dian, n.d.).
- BZF II Mao Zedong, Bianzhengfa weiwu lun (Dialectical Materialism) (n.p.: Zhong-guo chu-ban she, 1946).
- CLG Chinese Law and Government.
- COSE Mao Tse-tung, A Critique of Soviet Economics, trans. by Moss Roberts (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1977).
- GPCR documents Union Research Institute, CCP Documents of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966-1967 (Hong Kong: URI, 1968).
- IS Issues and Studies.
- IYASC Is Yugoslavia a Socialist Country? (Peking: FLP, 1963).
- Ji Takeuchi Minoru (ed.), Mao Zedong Ji (Collected Writings of Mao Zedong) (Tokyo: Hokubasha, 1970-72), Volumes I-X.
- LLL Long Live Leninism (Peking: FLP, 1960).
- M & A Stuart R. Schram and Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, Marxism and Asia: An Introduction with Readings (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1969).
- MDOCC John Wilson Lewis (ed.), Major Doctrines of Communist China (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. Ltd., 1964).
- Miscellany Joint Publication Research Service, Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought (1949-1968) (Arlington, Virginia: February 1974), Parts I and II.
- MP Jerome Ch'en (ed.), Mao Papers: Anthology and Bibliography (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

MTTU Stuart Schram (ed.), Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed: Talks and Letters: 1956-71 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).

MZDOC Nick Knight, "Mao Zedong's On Contradiction: An Annotated Translation of the Pre-Liberation Text", Griffith Asian Papers No. 3 (Nathan: School of Modern Asian Studies, Griffith University, 1981).

NCNA New China News Agency.

ODD The Origin and Development of the Differences Between the Leadership of the CPSU and Ourselves (Peking: FLP, 1963).

PC-TDOP Peaceful Coexistence--Two Diametrically Opposed Policies (Peking: FLP, 1963).

PR Peking Review.

PRD Boyd Compton (ed.), Mao's China: Party Reform Documents, 1942-44 (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1952).

PRKR The Proletarian Revolution and Khrushchov's Revisionism (Peking: FLP, 1964).

PTMTT Stuart R. Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969, revised ed.).

SCMM Survey of China Mainland Magazines.

Ssu-Ch'ing Richard Baum and Frederick C. Teiwes, Ssu-ch'ing: The Socialist Education Movement of 1962-66 (Berkeley: Chinese Research Monographs, University of California, 1968).

SUICC Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside (Peking: FLP, 1957).

SW I-IV Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung (Peking: FLP, 1967), Volumes I-IV.

SW V Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung (Peking: FLP, 1977), Volume V.

- SW (1956) , Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1956).
- TEWC Mao Tse-tung, Talk at an Enlarged Working Conference Convened by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (Peking: FLP, 1978).
- USW Unselected Works of Mao Tse-tung: 1957 (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1976).
- Wansui (1969) Mao Zedong sixiang wansui (Long Live the Thought of Mao Zedong) (n.p.: preface dated August 1969). This is the main Taiwan reprint of documents by Mao released during the Cultural Revolution.
- Wansui (1967) Mao Zedong sixiang wansui (Long Live the Thought of Mao Zedong) (n.p.: 1967). This is also a Taiwan reprint.
- Wansui (suppt.) An untitled collection appended to Mao Zedong sixiang wansui (n.p.: April 1967).
- WYLSLWS Mao Zedong de geming wenyi luxian shengli wansui (Long Live the Victory of Mao Zedong's Revolutionary Line on Art and Literature) (Peking: n.p., July 1967).
- XJ I-IV Mao Zedong xuanji (Selected Works of Mao Zedong) (Peking: Ren-min chu-ban she, 1966), Volumes I-IV.
- XJ V Mao Zedong xuanji (Selected Works of Mao Zedong) (Peking: Ren-min chu-ban she, 1977), Volume V.
- ZKDDZY Mao Zedong, Zai kuangda de zhongyang gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua (Talk at an Enlarged Central Work Conference) (Peking: Ren-min chu-ban she, 1978).

Note: To avoid confusion, in the footnoting that follows volume numbers will be given in Roman numerals.

INTRODUCTION

As both a Marxist and an educated Chinese, Mao Zedong stood at the confluence of two intellectual traditions, both of which stressed the over-riding influence of the past on contemporary social activity. Although these two traditions differed radically in their approach to the explanation of historical occurrences, both nevertheless were imbued with a strong sensitivity to the notion of man's progression through time, and the relationship of the past to present and future. Given this shared sensitivity to the notion of historical time, it is not surprising that those Chinese who were legatees of both traditions should possess a well-developed sense of history, perceiving their actions as part of a temporal continuum rather than as mere isolated and random behaviour owing no obligation to the past.¹ The very possession of this historical sense was, in fact, to become an important personal ingredient for a generation of Chinese who perceived themselves not only as the heirs to the historical past, but as bearing the heavy responsibility for creating a future in marked contradiction to that past. As a member of this generation, Mao's own sensitivity to history was heightened as his role as political actor became more and more historical, until finally, in the latter years of his life, he was to become identified with history, history and will conjoined, the union of man and process.

This increasing sensitivity to history, and the radical fluctuations in Mao's political fortunes over the last four decades of his life (to which this was in part related), enjoin the observer

1. See Arif Dirlik, "Mirror to Revolution: Early Marxist Images of Chinese History," The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2 (February 1974), pp. 193-223.

to tread with care in making general observations regarding Mao's conception of history. For Mao obviously did not approach history in a constant, detached or "academic" way (as a professional historian would be more inclined to do), but rather as an historical and political actor whose urgent need to grasp the development and flow of history for purposes of strategy and tactical formulations has given rise to a conception of history which contains a vividness resulting from the immediacy of perception of historical actions and consequences. Mao's reading of history (regardless of its academic status) was astute, and the very success of this historical interpretation must, in no small measure, be counted as one of the elements which gave the Chinese Communists their eventual victory. Mao's deep sensitivity to the flow of history communicated itself vividly to Mark Gayn, who in 1947 visited Yan'an and interviewed Mao. It is worth reproducing Gayn's impressions here, for they are very similar to those one gets from a reading of Mao's writings:

Mao's second preoccupation is with history [his first being that, according to Gayn, of rural China]. He sees his revolution as an integral part of the entire experience of the Chinese people. Thus, a conversation with Mao can be unsettling, for the visitor may quickly lose all sense of time. Mao may be speaking of an ambush in which his armies caught an enemy column, and suddenly the visitor becomes aware that the battle that is being described is not a recent one but one much like it a thousand years earlier.

With me, Mao criss-crossed history, until I began to feel that the great men and villains of the past were familiar and contemporary, and that what was happening now was indeed a natural sequel to a much older drama.

Most revolutionaries seek a link with the past, if only to establish a claim to historical respectability and native roots. But with Mao I came to feel that history was his habitat, from the first Chinese dynasty on, and that he felt close kinship to all the great rebels of the past. This

sense of historic continuity seemed to give depth to his ideas and policies.²

History clearly lived for Mao in the significance of its panoramic dimensions for the enactment of the contemporary scenario; it also lived for Mao in that, being at the centre of that contemporary historical drama, the consequences of previously devised strategies and tactics could be relatively quickly apprehended, and the accuracy of previous historical interpretation readily evaluated. This historical feed-back refined Mao's sensitivity to history as a process, and made him more aware of the possibilities and limitations of executive decision within a fluid situation like the Chinese revolution.

Any serious attempt to interpret features of Mao's philosophy of history runs immediately into certain knotty methodological problems.

The first of these is the problem of periodization. Mao's literary output and political career spanned more than half a century, and coincided with one of the most turbulent and violent chapters in modern history. Mao was no ivory-tower historian or philosopher, and many of his essays and documents were written in response to challenges and changes in the immediate political environment; there was therefore an intimate connection between the social and political environment and the development of his thought. It would, in light of this intimate connection, be somewhat surprising to find in Mao's literary heritage a constancy and unity which transcends the contours of the social and historical development which characterized its production.

2. Mark Gayn, "Mao Tse-tung Reassessed," in Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell (eds.), China Readings 3: Communist China (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 104.

To seek for such a transcendent constancy and unity would be to ignore the potential for both change and development exhibited by Mao in intellectual response to external pressures, and would neglect the role played by a changing environment in contributing to his fund of experience. It is therefore important to perceive the historical relativity in Mao's thinking if interpretation is not to falsely attribute a supra-historical constancy to that thought.

However, it is evident that many secondary critiques tend to ignore this intimate connection between social and political environment and the development of Mao's thought, and there is frequently a tendency to treat the documents which represent Mao's literary heritage as though they constitute a supra-temporal whole. In such an approach, documents from widely separated periods with highly differentiated historical and political backgrounds are treated as though produced in some form of historical vacuum. From this presumed unity of Mao's literary works are then derived interpretations of the "essential" Maoist view on a large variety of subjects. The danger of this approach (as exemplified in the methodological position of Starr³ and Chin⁴) is that important distinctions and variations which emerged in the development of Mao's thought (often as a function of changes in the historical and political environment) tend to be disguised, and thus ignored; the emphasis on continuities leading to an unfortunate neglect of discontinuities and variations. Such variations and discontinuities were, as this thesis will demonstrate, real and

3. See John Bryan Starr, Continuing the Revolution: the Political Thought of Mao (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), esp. pp. xi-xii.

4. Steve S.K. Chin, The Thought of Mao Tse-tung: Form and Content, trans. Alfred H.Y. Lin (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies Papers and Monographs, 1979), esp. p. 204.

substantial enough to suggest that the concept of an "essential" Mao should be abandoned in favour of an approach which locates and anchors Mao and his writings historically. It would appear that the most convenient method of doing this is to construct a periodization in the development of Mao's thought.⁵ This study has adopted a periodization which divides the development of Mao's thought into six periods:

I. The Pre-Yan'an Period: That is, the period covering Mao's intellectual and political career up to his establishment in China's North-West following the Long March of 1935. This period could obviously be the subject of a further subdivision; for example, a pre-Marxist period,⁶ in which much of Mao's intellectual energy was directed to the problem of Hunanese self-government and themes common to the early period of the May Fourth Movement;⁷ and his early Marxist period covering the period up to and including the First United Front, the Jiangxi Soviet and the Long March.⁸ This pre-Yan'an period has not been adopted for analysis within the scope of this study, for although it is extremely important in any attempt to understand the general development of Mao's intellectual and political career, the texts of

5. See my Introduction to MZDOC, pp. 3-7.

6. Stuart Schram has used this title, PTMTT, pp. 152-160.

7. See Angus W. McDonald, Jr., "Mao Tse-tung and the Hunan Self-Government Movement, 1920: An Introduction and Five Translations," China Quarterly 68 (December 1976), pp. 751-777; also the translations of this period from the Mao Zedong Ji in M. Henri Day, Mao Zedong 1917-1927: Documents (Stockholm: n.p., 1975).

8. For analyses of Mao's career during this period, see Jerome Ch'en, Mao and the Chinese Revolution (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 73-200; also Stuart R. Schram, Mao Tse-tung (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), pp. 60-191; also PTMTT, pp. 32-66; also John E. Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 1927-1935 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966).

this period do not indicate that Mao had developed a philosophy of history of sufficient sophistication and systematization to warrant the inclusion of this period in a detailed textual analysis. Such an assertion is not intended to undervalue Mao's contributions in other areas during this early period, such as his approach to the peasant problem or guerilla strategy, which were in themselves remarkable, and laying the foundation for his subsequent more theoretical conclusions in these areas. However, it is believed that the pre-Yan'an Mao had not attained a maturity of theoretical perspective which could afford him a consistently coherent and relatively systematic historical framework by which to interpret the contemporary activity of society and its development over time. Likewise, Mao's approach to Marxism during the pre-Yan'an period, while again laying the foundation for its eventual "Sinification" at his hands, does not provide evidence of a consistency approaching anywhere near that of the more mature stance which resulted from the reflections and study of the Yan'an period.⁹ Consequently, it would have been difficult to apply to this early period the exegetical methodology employed throughout this study; moreover, any conclusions would have been highly tentative and lacking the authority which would derive from an assumed degree of consistency

9. For example, see Stuart Schram's interpretation of Mao's class analysis during 1926-27 in "Mao Zedong and the Role of the Various Classes in the Chinese Revolution, 1923-1927," in The Polity and Economy of China: The Late Professor Yuji Muramatsu Commemoration Volume (Tokyo: Toyo Kenzai Shinposha, 1975), pp. 227-239. Schram suggests that

...Mao endeavoured, in 1926-1927, to employ Marxist concepts for the analysis of Chinese society, though his mastery of them was by no means complete. At the same time, he diverged sharply from orthodoxy, and from the essential logic of Marxism, not only by the sheer importance he accorded to the countryside, but by attributing to the peasants both the capacity to organize themselves, and a clear consciousness of their historical role. (p. 235)

in the documents under analysis. As a result, this period is not included in this study, although occasional reference is made to its texts.

II. The Yan'an Period (1936-45): The texts of this period provide evidence that the years of the Second United Front and the Anti-Japanese War were both politically and intellectually fruitful for Mao, and that the reflection and study of the early part of the period had afforded him a reservoir of theoretical ability and confidence which emerges clearly in his numerous and weighty pronouncements on a wide variety of matters of import. James Hsiung has, in fact, described this early period (1935-40) as "Mao's mature period."¹⁰ While one cannot argue with Hsiung's belief that the documents of this period indicate a heightened sophistication and an extended vision, it is doubtful in retrospect if it is plausible to reserve that title for these early years of the Yan'an period; for the intellectual achievements of this period are rather overshadowed by the originality of thought and imaginative flair in translating that thought into action exhibited by Mao in his quest to formulate a Chinese road to socialism in the middle and late fifties. Nevertheless, while one might quibble over the title to apply to the Yan'an period, there can be no doubt that it represented an extremely significant chapter in the growth of Mao's intellectual and political stature. As such, it is afforded in this study the attention it deserves, and it is treated as one of the two "major" periods for analysis. While the Yan'an period is normally regarded as running up to 1947 (at which time the Guomindang forces captured the city during the Civil War), this study will take the Seventh Party Congress of May 1945 as its cut-off point. This Congress

10. James Chieh Hsiung, Ideology and Practice: The Evolution of Chinese Communism (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), pp. 67-73.

was to mark the culmination of the effort by Mao and his adherents to install his thought as the Party's guiding ideological orthodoxy, and it represents something of a watershed in both the Party's history and the development of Mao's thought.¹¹

III. Civil War and Consolidation (1945-54): This period is, in this study, the subject of only a rather limited analysis. This restricted attention derives from a belief that Mao added little that was theoretically innovative during this period. During the period 1945-49, Mao was largely preoccupied with waging a civil war which afforded little time for reflection and the broadening of theoretical perspectives; and in the early years of the People's Republic, the imperatives (both political and economic) of consolidation with the concomitant need to employ a "second-hand" approach to development described under the rubric of "leaning to one side", dictated against assays into the formulation of original or innovative ideas or theories. Nevertheless, with Liberation in 1949, Mao did pen several important documents dealing with his views on history, and these documents (along with several others) are the subject of a brief analysis.

IV. The Post-Cooperativization Period (1955-64): This is treated (as is the Yan'an period) as a "major" period in the development of Mao's thought. The extensive analysis applied to the texts of this period is based on the premise that, following the success of

11. Possibly the most complete analysis of the development of Mao's thought during the Yan'an period is that of Raymond Wylie; see Wylie's thesis, Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta, and the Conscious Creation of "Mao Tse-tung's Thought" in the Chinese Communist Party, 1935-1945 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1976); and the published version of this thesis, The Emergence of Maoism: Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta and the Search for Chinese Theory 1935-1945 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980); also Raymond Wylie, "Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta and the 'Sinification of Marxism', 1936-38," The China Quarterly 79 (September 1979), pp. 447-480.

cooperativization and dramatic changes in the international environment, Mao set out to formulate a developmental strategy suited to China's particular conditions, and that the result of this quest--the Chinese road to socialism--can be represented with some justification as the apogee of Mao's intellectual career.¹² The texts of this period give witness to an originality of thought conjoined with a breadth and depth of theoretical and practical experience which signifies that it was during this period (rather than the years of the early Yan'an period) that the mature Mao emerged. Consequently, it is given extended attention; the analysis of this period plus that of the Yan'an period constitute the centre-piece of this study.

V. Cultural Revolution (1965-69): As with the 1945-54 period, the Cultural Revolution is given only marginal attention. Although this may seem somewhat inapposite in view of the enormous attention devoted to it by Western observers,¹³ it is not accepted here that the Cultural Revolution necessarily represents the high-point of either Mao's intellectual or political career, or that the views which emerged during the Cultural Revolution on the problems of causation and time in the historical process (which are the main subjects of this study)

12. Although this has become a rather unfashionable view in recent years, it remains the opinion of this writer.

13. Although it would take a very extensive bibliography to adequately cover the many books and articles on the Cultural Revolution, several works stand out as worthy of mention; Richard Baum with Louise B. Bennet (eds.), China in Ferment: Perspectives on the Cultural Revolution (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1971); also Edward E. Rice, Mao's Way (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972, 1974); also C.L. Chiou, Maoism in Action: the Cultural Revolution (St. Lucia; University of Queensland Press, 1974); also Joan Robinson, The Cultural Revolution in China (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969, 1970); also Stuart R. Schram, "The Cultural Revolution in Historical Perspective," in Stuart R. Schram (ed.), Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); also David Milton and Nancy Dall Milton, The Wind Will Not Subside: Years in Revolutionary China--1964-1969 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

are the definitive expression of his sentiment on these topics.¹⁴ Moreover, while the Cultural Revolution is (as it has been since Mao's death) the subject of an ongoing re-evaluation by both the Chinese and Western scholars,¹⁵ some caution is advised in taking the Cultural Revolution as representing the quintessence of Mao's political style or intellectual views; for it may be that rather than representing the high-point in his career, the Cultural Revolution was something of an aberration when compared to other periods in Mao's intellectual career. In addition, it must be pointed out that the methodology employed throughout this study (to which I will turn shortly) precludes much beyond a close textual analysis of Mao's own texts. The Cultural Revolution as a political phenomenon is thus beyond the scope of this study.

VI. Post-Cultural Revolution (1970-76): The claim made by the current Chinese leadership that the period of the Cultural Revolution lasted from 1966 through to 1976 is not accepted here. It seems quite evident that this decade was marked by some very significant changes, and that it is still preferable to perceive the Cultural Revolution proper as concluding with the Ninth Party Congress of April 1969. In the context of this study, such a cut-off point is made necessary by the fact that the twilight years of Mao's life witnessed no formulation of any major theoretical innovations on his part. The documents

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14. Stuart Schram has argued, for example, "While the Cultural Revolution can hardly be seen as the logically inevitable outcome of Mao's previous ideas and career, he has so thoroughly identified himself with this attempt to transform the whole spirit and structure of Chinese society that assessment of the man and his life work today must begin here," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1977 ed.) XI, p. 469.
 15. See especially "On Questions of Party History: Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China," Beijing Review XXIV: 27 (6 July 1981), pp. 10-39.

available from these twilight years are usually extremely cryptic, often constituted of only one-line observations or directives. A textual analysis of such documents would thus have been an extremely problematic exercise, one which might have resulted in some rather dubious interpretations. Consequently, the post-Cultural Revolution period (like the pre-Yan'an period) has been omitted from this study.

The periodization adopted for this study and outlined above is not, it is believed, a temporal compartmentalization artificially imposed on Mao's intellectual development, but one which emerges fairly obviously from the texts themselves. In the study which follows, each period will be given a brief introduction which will both place it *in situ* historically, and demonstrate the validity of defining it as a discrete period for analysis.

One objection to the utilization of such a periodization in the analysis of Mao's thought might be that it does not really solve the problem upon which the "essential" Mao approach falters; for in the final analysis, the utilization of a periodization merely narrows the temporal confines within which one searches for the "essential" Mao, and that such an analysis only serves to arrive at not one, but several "essential" Maos--the Mao of the Yan'an period, the Mao of the Cultural Revolution, and so on. There is, of course, some justification to such a charge. But what are the alternatives? If one were to deny the validity of generalizations formulated from an analysis of the Mao documents within discrete and reasonably uniform historical periods, the only alternative would be to narrow the temporal scope of the analysis to the point at which it would be limited to individual documents written at particular historical moments. Such an approach would not only be very unwieldy in methodological terms,

but would ignore the evident relationship which did exist between the documents within (and sometimes across) different periods. It is quite clear that Mao built upon previous experiences and frequently does refer back to earlier documents. It is therefore methodologically inappropriate to deny the possibility of continuity in Mao's thought, just as it is inappropriate to ignore the existence of difference and change. The periodization utilized by this study hopes to avoid both methodological dangers, and by so doing to allow a clear elucidation of both change and continuity in the development of Mao's thought; for there was both, and the study which follows will attempt to highlight these areas of continuity and change.

A second methodological problem is created by the fragmentary nature of the literary corpus left by Mao. Although the total output was prodigious (there are, in the ten volumes of the Mao Zedong Ji alone, some 427 documents), the great bulk of Mao's writings is composed of relatively short pieces in the form of numerous letters, directives, editorials, public addresses and lectures, intra-Party memoranda, poems, polemical rejoinders to political adversaries, and interviews with domestic and foreign correspondents. His lengthier and more carefully considered writings deal with a variety of subjects ranging from Marxist dialectics to proposals for constitutional reform. No where has Mao left behind one detailed, comprehensive and closely-argued document setting out in its entirety his own personal philosophy of history. In fact, Mao's views on history and historical interpretation are scattered at random throughout his writings. As a result, an exercise in exegetical interpretation is the only methodology open to the curious observer. This exegesis, which constitutes the basic methodological approach employed in this study, enjoins a thorough

scrutiny of the texts, extricating embedded references to particular themes or topics, piecing them together, and analyzing the picture that emerges. Such exegesis, however, raises problems of authenticity; if we piece together these scattered references (much as we would a jig-saw puzzle), and construct a "notional model" of Mao's approach to the various problem areas within his philosophy of history,¹⁶ are we by this very act of rearrangement to attain system and order where none or little may previously have existed, introducing our own criteria for historical interpretation and disguising this by appeals to the Mao documents? This is a very real danger for those with any pretensions to objectivity, and one felt keenly in the preparation of this study. The only way that one can compensate for any unintended bias is to stick as closely as possible to the texts under investigation, and, insofar as is possible, let the texts speak for themselves.

This has necessitated the frequent use of quotation which, while being a device sometimes disruptive of an even literary flow in explication, will enable the reader to satisfy him or herself that Mao's original intention is not being lightly tampered with by this writer; it has also necessitated an even more frequent recourse to footnoting as a means of directing the reader's attention to sources when full quotations seemed unnecessary. By the employment of these two devices, it is hoped that the study which follows has remained firmly anchored to the texts, and by so allowing the texts to constitute the final arbiter in any point of interpretation, to present a reasonable facsimile of

16. A good example of the construction of a "notional model" appears in Jack Gray, "The Two Roads: Alternative Strategies of Social Change and Economic Growth in China," in Schram (ed.), Op. cit., pp. 109-157, esp. pp. 149-50, where Gray builds up a "notional model" of the "capitalist road" pursued by Liu Shaoqi. See also Ralf Dahrendorf's construction by means of exegesis of what might have been Marx's model of the class society, Class and Class Conflict in an Industrial Society (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), pp. 3-35.

what Mao Zedong himself might have written on these problems of historical interpretation had he been afforded both time and inclination to do so.

This method of exegesis cannot, however, displace entirely the role of the interpreter, but it does serve to constrain the wilder excesses of his imagination. The role of interpretation comes most to the fore when the texts which are the subject of analysis fail to provide a necessary piece in the jig-saw puzzle which is the end product of such a study; in such a case, the interpreter must be afforded somewhat more discretion to "stretch" the evidence over the gap that would otherwise result. This liberty has occasionally been taken in the course of this study, although it is hoped that where this has happened, the resultant interpretation has remained within the spirit of Mao's general approach, the letter itself being absent. The role of the interpreter is also enhanced on those occasions when the texts appear to provide explicitly contradictory assertions. Although Lucien Pye is well off the mark when he asserts "Mao clearly belongs to the school that believes that consistency is the hobgoblin of the small mind",¹⁷ there were occasions on which Mao clearly contradicted his own previously expressed sentiment on a particular point or theme. Faced with this dilemma, the interpreter must again attempt to isolate the spirit of Mao's general intent, seeking to place the point at issue within the wider context of Mao's opinion, and by so doing, ascertaining which of the contradictory assertions is afforded the greater validity. A choice has been made in this spirit when such contradictions have arisen in the course of this study; such contradictions, however, are normally noted, and reference provided in

17. Lucien W. Pye, Mao Tse-tung: The Man in the Leader (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1976), p. 44.

the footnoting to the opposing statements.

The fragmentation of Mao's literary corpus also imposes several other methodological difficulties on an exegetical form of interpretation. The first and most important of these is the problem of authorship. We are, as yet, a long way from having an undisputed bibliography of those documents penned by Mao, those written under his supervision, and those authored by him in collaboration with others.¹⁸ For example, Ray Wylie, in his study of the development of "Mao Zedong's Thought" between 1935-45, has suggested that Mao's political secretary Chen Boda was responsible for, or signally influenced, several of the important theoretical documents which appeared over Mao's signature during the Yan'an period;¹⁹ likewise, Jerome Ch'en, in his path-breaking study of Mao's literary style, also questions the authorship of some documents traditionally attributed to Mao's pen.²⁰ Indeed Mao himself referred (in March 1964) to the fact that documents did go out over his signature for which he had not been personally responsible:

'On the Current Situation and Our Tasks' was spoken by me in 1947. Someone transcribed it and it was revised by me. At that time I had contracted a disease whereby I could not write. Now when I want something written, it is all done by a secretary, not by my hand. Of course, some things may be written for me by other people.²¹

This problem is further exacerbated for the interpreter by the fact that quite a number of very important theoretical documents which

18. See MP, pp. 163-221; also John Bryan Starr and Nancy Anne Dyer (comp.), Post-Liberation Works of Mao Zedong: A Bibliography and Index (Berkeley: The Centre for Chinese Studies, 1976).

19. See Wylie, Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta, and the Conscious Creation..., Op. cit., pp. 124, 164, 329.

20. MP, xiii-xxxi, esp. p. xxviii.

21. Miscellany II, p. 338; Wansui (1969), p. 481.

we know were not written solely by Mao (this is particularly the case with the documents of the Sino-Soviet split), but which are believed to reflect his opinion, cannot safely be omitted from a textual study of this nature. Consequently, where some doubt concerning Mao's authorship of a particular document or documents arises in the course of this study, the information available and relevant to an ascription of authorship is produced, usually in the footnoting. It needs be pointed out here, however, that the literary analysis of the texts along lines suggested by Jerome Ch'en to provide literary and textual evidence of authorship, has barely commenced. From this point of view, the textual analysis of Mao's literary heritage is still in its infancy.

Besides the problem of authorship, the interpreter is confronted by the difficulties which arise from the differences which frequently exist between original (or unofficial) and official versions of a text. This problem is heightened by the employment of a periodization, for if the periodization is to fulfill its heuristic function, it is necessary that revisions of texts outside the temporal limit of the period under analysis, be not included in that period. This problem has been substantially alleviated, at least for most of the pre-Liberation texts, by the painstaking labours of the Japanese scholars (under the supervision of Takeuchi Minoru) who have produced in the Mao Zedong Ji an annotated variorum edition of the original texts indicating all subsequent alterations and redactions. Anyone working in this field owes these scholars a heart-felt debt of gratitude, for the comparison of texts is a laborious and time-consuming occupation.

However, certain very important texts attributed to the Yan'an period were not analyzed by the Japanese scholars in the Mao Zedong Ji,

and this because no extant version of the original texts was available for comparison with the post-Liberation official texts. This problem was made more acute by the fact that these documents, On Contradiction and On Practice, are rightly regarded as central to an understanding of Mao's philosophy. Where then were these documents to be placed historically? Were they to be assumed to be a product of the early Yan'an period and analyzed accordingly, or a product of the early post-Liberation period? If they were accepted as compositions of the early Yan'an period, might there not be a danger of falsely anticipating by some fifteen years important (indeed central) elements of Mao's thought which may have emerged only with Liberation?; and if accepted as compositions of the early post-Liberation period, might there not be a danger of underestimating Mao's capacity as a Marxist theoretician during the early Yan'an period?

Confronted by this dilemma, I began to formulate a methodology for textual analysis which might allow some resolution of this problem of the dating of texts. The methodology involved mounting a comparison of the post-Liberation texts of On Contradiction and On Practice with other undisputed documents of the putative period of composition (that is, the Yan'an period). These documents were analyzed along a variety of dimensions--linguistic usage of key words and phrases, utilization of concepts, and textual interpolations such as quotations--against which the official post-Liberation texts could be compared. Seemingly fortuitously this analysis was virtually completed when pre-Liberation versions of On Contradiction and On Practice came to light through the endeavours of Takeuchi Minoru. It was thus possible to mount for the first time a detailed textual study of these documents and to perform a comparative analysis of the pre- and post-Liberation texts

after the style of the Mao Zedong Ji. I have published in several sources the results of this textual analysis, and there is consequently no necessity to reproduce them here.²² It needs only to be said that it is now possible to determine with a reasonably high degree of accuracy the sections of On Contradiction and On Practice which were written during the Yan'an period, and those which were added in the early post-Liberation period. It is therefore possible to proceed to a study of the writings of the Yan'an period with some confidence as to the textual validity of the documents under investigation.

However, the problem remains for the texts of the Wansui collections as these are gradually published in official form; which of the texts should be used, the original or the official? Are the revisions and additions evident in some official versions of earlier "unrehearsed" texts necessarily those of Mao himself, and if so, to what period are these to be attributed? For example, the vitally important speech of 25 April 1956 entitled On the Ten Great Relationships was first published officially in 1977, and the official version is in some respects significantly different from the original text.²³ When were these later additions and revisions made? We know that the text was still circulating as a *neibu* (internal) document in its original form in December 1966,²⁴ so it seems safe to assume that Mao had not got around to revising this text prior to the Cultural Revolution. Consequently, the official text, while useful for

22. See Nick Knight, "Mao Zedong's On Contradiction and On Practice: Pre-Liberation Texts," The China Quarterly 84 (December 1980), pp. 641-668; also MZDOC, passim.

23. For an analysis and comparison of the official and unofficial versions of this text, see Stuart R. Schram, "Chairman Hua Edits Mao's Literary Heritage: 'On the Ten Great Relationships'," China Quarterly 69 (March 1977), pp. 126-135.

24. Jerome Ch'en (ed.), Mao (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 85; also Wansui (suppt.), p. 28.

comparison, should not be the document employed in a study of Mao's thought during the period 1955-64. Unfortunately, such clearcut evidence is not available for many of the texts. The response of this study to this problem has been to generally favour original over later official and revised texts, but this has not excluded the employment (in some few cases) of subsequent official additions when it is clear that these do not in any way subvert the intent of the original document. Information on such differences and variations is provided in the footnoting by giving reference to the various versions of the text under investigation.

In a textual analysis of this kind, the problem of language and translation can also pose difficulties. It may seem trite to state the obvious, but Mao thought and wrote in Chinese; the problem of finding reasonable equivalents in English for Mao's assertions in Chinese is occasionally exacerbated by the fact that Mao's own language (like that of most writers) sometimes could be rather imprecise and failing to communicate its intent exactly. Both of these difficulties of language have enjoined as necessary the utilization where possible of the texts in their original form, this in order to ascertain that the available translations in English are adequate, and to permit a degree of sensitivity to the manner in which Mao employed language, this hopefully allowing a degree of insight in those instances in which interpretation of intent has arisen. Here again, an attempt has been made to offset the problem of translation by providing in footnoting reference to alternative translations when available, as well as to the various versions of the text in its original Chinese. Any translation deemed a dubious rendering can thus be checked against the original fairly easily. For the most part, readily available

translations have been employed, although these have occasionally required some alteration. In those instances in which there could be some doubt as to the integrity of a particular translation, the Chinese has been added in parentheses, using, as is used throughout this study, the *pinyin* form of transliteration.

Finally, in formulating a close textual analysis, it was decided appropriate to adopt a methodological position after John Bryan Starr, and refuse the temptation to become enmeshed in debate with the large and growing number of secondary critiques of Mao Zedong's thought which now abound.²⁵ While an occasional reference is made in the body of this study to an interpretation directly at odds with my own, for the most part, such critiques (where mentioned at all) have been relegated to the footnoting. This avoidance of combat has not been adopted for want of valour, but out of a discretion imposed by the dictates of brevity and an inclination to regard successful exegesis as resulting from a singular attention to the object of study. The objective of this study is the elucidation of certain problems in Mao Zedong's philosophy of history (and especially the problems of causation and time), not the many and varied interpretations of Mao's critics and admirers. Nevertheless, the existence of such numerous critiques and interpretations has suggested to this writer that his efforts can be regarded as no more than an "interpretive essay". It is not just a becoming modesty to assert such a status for the study that follows. Despite the methodological devices employed and discussed above, in the last analysis the final product can be no other than one individual's attempt to provide a reasoned elucidation of an aspect of

25. Starr, *Op. cit.*, pp. ix-x; it is also the approach adopted by Shlomo Avineri in his fine study of Marx's thought; The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

Mao's intellectual armoury. I am under no illusion that others, working even under the same methodological restrictions and from largely the same cultural and political perspective, might arrive at conclusions very different to my own. It is to be hoped merely that the conclusions that I have reached, based as they are on a close reading of the texts and some careful consideration, will be accepted as a contribution to the historically and politically important task of extending our collective understanding of the way Mao approached the interpretation of the historical process.

It must also be stressed, by way of further limitation, that this exegesis does not extend to an interpretation of Mao's philosophy of history in its entirety; such a task would have necessitated incorporation and comprehensive discussion of the whole gamut of Mao's philosophy, including his theory of contradictions (of which several excellent interpretations have already been written), and his epistemology.²⁶ The scope of this study is more restricted and monographic in nature, seeking to elucidate several central problems of Mao's philosophy of history, and especially the way in which he perceived causation and time in historical and social terms. This restriction noted, however, the following study has incorporated an analysis of Mao's views on Marxism and the underlying philosophy of science which informed his approach to the investigation of history and the formulation of historical generalizations; these two additions were found indispensable in the construction of a "notional model" of Mao's view of historical causation and time, for they served to direct attention to the manner in which Mao approached the investigation of history generally. In

26. See Starr, *Op. cit.*, pp. 3-45; also Brantly Womack, "Theory and Practice in the Thought of Mao Tse-tung," in James Chieh Hsiung (ed.), The Logic of "Maoism": Critiques and Explication (New York: Praeger, 1974), pp. 1-36.

some ways, Mao's ideas on scientific procedure (a rather unusual form of inductionism) have influenced the style adopted in this interpretation, for where possible, this study has attempted to avoid applying Mao's philosophical maxims in a "deductive" way, but has sought out his observations and interpretations of the specific instances and examples which provided him with the confidence of the validity of those maxims. So, for example, while it is quite obvious that Mao regarded contradiction as the motive force of social development, it is not quite so obvious just how Mao perceived that potential for impulsion actually operating within society. To disclose this, one must look beyond what are so frequently taken by observers to be first principles (but which Mao believed to be the end product in a chain of inductive reasoning), and seek out his observations of the concrete manifestations of those principles.

Before turning, however, to an examination and interpretation of the texts of the Yan'an period, it is necessary firstly to make some comment on the themes that we seek, and introduce in some more detail the concepts of history and historical interpretation that we hope to elucidate.

CHAPTER ONEProblems in Mao Zedong's Philosophy of History

Mao Zedong's philosophy of history was constituted of a complex of interrelated and dynamically evolving themes. As was argued in the Introduction, there is no assumption made in this study that these elements of Mao's approach to historical interpretation remained constant throughout his intellectual or political career, or that such themes were necessarily without internal (though perhaps unrecognized) contradictions. While this study makes no claim to an exhaustive analysis of the total complex of Mao's philosophy of history, it has attempted to extricate and elucidate four of the major elements or problem areas which constitute a substantial, indeed essential, portion of that complete philosophy of history. The elements or problem areas selected for textual interpretation and analysis in this study are, firstly, the manner in which Mao perceived historical causation as operating in social and economic terms; secondly, Mao's perception of historical time and the future; thirdly, the philosophy of science underpinning Mao's approach to the derivation of historical laws and generalizations; and fourthly, Mao's approach to the problem of translating a "universal" theory of history such as Marxism into a national form without (so Mao hoped) detracting from the universal status of that theory.

While it has been necessary for methodological and explicatory reasons to extricate and isolate these elements from the total complex of Mao's philosophy of history, an attempt has been made to demonstrate the manner in which these different elements were interrelated, and how they meshed in a functioning cognitive totality which could provide

Mao with insights into the operation and flow of the historical process.

Let us now turn to a more detailed analysis of the background and constitution of the four problem areas selected for analysis in this study.

I. Causation in History

From a certain perspective, much of mankind's efforts to understand and interpret history can be categorized as the faltering attempts to dispel the mists of reality in search of some more substantial unreality which, by its transcendence above the mundane, could hold out promise of ultimate explanation of the human predicament. This quest for historical explanation in the realm of the spirit characterized many early civilizations, and was itself closely associated with religious practice and interpretation. In Greek mythology, for example, Zeus performed the role of the director of the cosmic play, while in Indian lore, Shiva gave meaning and direction to human activity. Likewise, for the pre-Christian Jews, history was revealed (through the medium of the prophets) by Yahweh, the demanding God of the Covenant. In these examples, the explanation of the human drama was sought above and beyond the realm of the internal mechanics of society as such, and interpreted man's individual and collective activities as being to a large extent the predicate of some supra-world force.

In the ancient Chinese tradition, there was something of an ambivalence towards the notion of historical causation. Needham has argued that the Chinese were the most historically-minded of all ancient peoples.¹ Indeed, in China history had become a separate

1. Joseph Needham, Time and Eastern Man (London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1965), pp. 10-11.

branch of learning by the third century A.D., and the first treatise on the writing of history in any language appeared in China in 710 A.D.² This preoccupation with history was to lead to the production of an historical literature unique both in volume of output and length and continuity of its record,³ and was in part at least a function of Chinese unwillingness to concede total control over man's history (as some other early civilizations had done) to some supra-world being or force. In traditional Confucian thought there was an evident tension between perception of a supernatural intervention in human and natural affairs, and a belief in the ability of man to act in accordance with the dictates of his own evaluating mind. This "limited fatalism" (as Munro has termed it⁴) was possibly related to the fact that the Chinese had no conception of special creation, creation of the cosmos or the human order *ex nihilo* by a supreme deity being unimagined by them.⁵ The Chinese utilized rather an anthropogenic constructivist interpretation of the origins of human society, perceiving the social, political and moral orders of the world as purposefully constructed by sage-kings of antiquity.⁶ As a result, there was in the Chinese tradition a greater emphasis on the capacity of the individual, through the morality of his actions, to selectively differentiate the social and political environment. This belief in the capacity of the

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2. E.G. Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu Chih-chi and Ssu-ma Kuang," in W.G. Beasley and E.G. Pulleyblank (eds.), Historians of China and Japan (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 134.
 3. See Beasley's introduction to Ibid., p. 1.
 4. Donald J. Munro, The Concept of Man in Early China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 85.
 5. Needham, Op. cit., p. 20.
 6. Yü-sheng Lin, "Radical Iconoclasm in the May Fourth Period and the Future of Chinese Liberalism," in Benjamin I. Schwartz (ed.), Reflections on the May Fourth Movement: A Symposium (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 38.

individual through right or moral actions to influence the social and political environment in turn lead to a style of historical analysis and writing which took the moral appropriateness of historical actions as a suitable point of departure in recording those actions for posterity. Chinese historical writing is thus strongly characterized by its moralistic tone, and its function was very much regarded as providing object lessons in proper or improper conduct for those who came after. This moralizing tendency is clearly evident in the chronologies of China's greatest historians. Liu Zhiji (661-721), for example, perceived the importance of history as a means of bringing to the attention of those in the present the actions of those in the past which might serve as a guide to correct moral behaviour:

But if history officers are not lacking, if bamboos and silk survive, then though the man himself has perished, vanished into the void, his deeds are as if present, bright as the Milky Way. So scholars who come after can open the wrappers and the boxes (which hold the books) and meet in spirit the men of antiquity, without leaving their own houses they can exhaust a thousand ages. When they see a worthy example they think of emulation, when they see an unworthy one, they examine themselves within... Such is the way in which good deeds and words are recorded, such is the way in which they encourage good and reprove evil. From this we see the advantages of history are very great. For that which living men strive for marks the vital path of the state. Can those who have the governance of states neglect it?⁷

Similarly, Si-ma Guang (1019-1086 A.D.), the author of the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government, was to echo this sentiment:

A prince amid his ten thousand daily concerns must wish to know comprehensively the merits and demerits of former ages.... Disregarding my inadequacy I have constantly wished to write a chronological history...and taking in all that a prince ought to know--everything pertaining to the

7. Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical...", in Beasley and Pulleyblank (eds.), Op. cit., p. 144.

rise and fall of dynasties and the good and ill fortune of the common people, all good and bad examples that can furnish models and warnings.⁸

In both of these passages, the "praise and blame" characteristic of Chinese historical writing is abundantly evident. What is also evident is the belief that a cognizance of proper moral conduct through such historical writing could constitute a significant influence on the behaviour of subsequent princes and states, thus leading to good government. The relationship between morality and history is thus clearly drawn.

However, while there has been in the Chinese tradition an emphasis on the role of man in history, Chinese historians have almost exclusively selected for attention those men whom they considered to be at the centre of the historical drama; the emperor, and his ministers and officials, who constituted the scholar-official class. It is the activities of this class which figure largely in Chinese historical writing. Moreover, it was members of this scholar-official class who were responsible for the recording of history. Chinese history was thus written, as Balazs has pointed out, by bureaucrats for bureaucrats.⁹ Indeed, Gray has argued that the "praise and blame" aspect of Chinese historical writing was closely associated with the monopoly of power held by these bureaucrats within Chinese society:

The monopoly of political authority by the imperially-appointed scholar officials led...to a scheme of cause and effect which magnified the role of the bureaucracy almost to the exclusion of other factors. Within this scheme, the essentially moral training of the bureaucracy led to

8. Quoted in Frederic Wakeman, Jr., History and Will: Philosophical Perspectives of Mao Tse-tung's Thought (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 55.

9. E. Balazs, "L'Histoire comme guide de la Pratique bureaucratique," in Beasley and Pulleyblank (eds.), Op. cit., pp. 78-94.

an undue emphasis on moral causes of historical events.¹⁰

This bias towards history as a record of the actions of scholar-officials is related also to a tendency in Chinese historiography towards an "heroic" view of history in which the fate of the many is decided by the daring-do of the few. This tendency is clearly in evidence in the writing of the Grand Historian Si-Ma Qian (c. 145-87 B.C.). A good example is Si-Ma Qian's reconstruction of Xiang Yu's dispute with the king of Han:

Hsiang Yü sent word to the king of Han, saying, 'The world has been in strife and confusion for several years now, solely because of the two of us. I would like to invite the king of Han to a personal combat to decide who is the better man. Let us bring no more needless suffering to the fathers and sons of the rest of the world'.¹¹

Burton Watson has argued, however, that Si-Ma Qian employed a conception of history which attributed the actions of such heroes to fate (*ming*) or heaven (*tian*).¹² Nevertheless, in Xiang Yu's case at least, Si-Ma Qian is unequivocal in asserting that his eventual destruction had nothing to do with heaven and rested solely on the errors that Xiang Yu himself had committed.¹³ In general, however, it is safer to regard Chinese historiography as manifesting an unresolved tension between an (often) implicit supernatural fatalism and an assertion of the capacity of the individual hero or scholar-official to restructure

10. J. Gray, "History Writing in Twentieth Century China: Notes on its Background and Development," in Ibid., p. 186.

11. Burton Watson (trans.), Records of the Grand Historian of China (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961) I, p. 66. Emphasis added.

12. Burton Watson, Ssu-ma Ch'ien: Grand Historian of China (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 143-4.

13. Records..., Op. cit., p. 74.

(through correct moral conduct) the social and political environment, and thus create history. The notion of an "heroic" history in the Chinese vein cannot, therefore, be readily compared with "heroic" views of history in the Western tradition such as Carlyle's.

Moreover, despite the concession to man of at least some capacity to initiate or influence history, there is in Chinese historical writing virtually no attempt at a wider synthesis such that cause and effect could be cast in broader generalizations. There was, as Pulleyblank has pointed out, a tendency to restrict "attention to one isolated event at a time, with a certain amount of backward and forward glancing, generalizing about a man's character, etc., but without the attempt to see each event interwoven into a complex mesh of inter-relationships with other events."¹⁴

This absence of any wider synthesis to create broad historical patterns of cause and effect stands in marked contrast to the philosophy of history held by Mao Zedong. It will become apparent as this study proceeds that Mao's interpretation of historical causation depended very heavily on a view which perceived history as a process in which the various structures of society were causally interconnected. Moreover, changes in such social structures could have ramifications for society which were both far-reaching and long-term. The reverberations of such changes and developments at one point in history could be causally responsible for large-scale transformations of other sectors of society and even of society as a whole at a later point in time. Mao thus did not share the narrow limitations assumed by traditional Chinese historiography in terms of cause and effect relationships. It

14. Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical...", in Beasley and Pulleyblank (eds.), Op. cit., p. 158.

will also become evident that Mao repudiated other central features of Chinese historiography such as the "heroic" view of history, the emphasis on the moral conduct of scholar-officials as the locus of historical causation, and the possibility that the supernatural should be attributed with any degree of effectivity in historical causation. While Mao may therefore have inherited the sensitivity to history shared by the Chinese tradition, the theoretical concepts he employed to interpret historical causation owed far more to Marxism, a product not of the Chinese past, but of the Western intellectual tradition.

If the Chinese conception of history was characterized by a disinclination to draw broad generalizations regarding causation, this certainly has not been the case in the Western intellectual tradition. With the appearance of the Augustinian philosophy of history in the fifth century A.D., an attempt had finally been made to provide the ultimate explanation of history by perceiving in all human actions the divine hand of God. According to St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.), the complex interaction of states, the often seemingly patternless development of human politics, and the fortuitous visitation of natural or human-inspired calamities in the shape of war or famine, all had a meaning and pattern ordained by God, who is the author and director of the historical drama played out on earth. In his De Civitate Dei (City of God), St. Augustine portrays all that had occurred in human history as a function of God's will made manifest:

The one true God, who never permits the human race to be without the working of His wisdom and His power, granted to the Roman people an empire, when He willed it and as large as He willed it. It was the same God who gave kingdoms to the Assyrians and even to the Persians....It was this God, too, who gave power to men, to Marius and Caesar, to

Augustus and Nero...All such things the one true God rules and governs according to His will. And, though, His reasons may be hidden, they have never been unjust.¹⁵

This attribution of ultimate control over history to God, and the subordination of history to His perhaps hidden purpose, "opened the sphere of history to teleology."¹⁶ It is almost impossible to overestimate the impact of this teleology on Western historical and political thought. Such was its power that its influence survived the vicissitudes of both the Renaissance and Reformation to signally influence the historical perceptions of Protestant thinking, and especially Calvinism; "God not only foresaw the fall of the first man," Calvin (1509-64) wrote in his Institutes of the Christian Religion, "but also arranged all by the determination of his own will."¹⁷ The parallel between Calvin's position and the Augustinian philosophy of history is evident. Moreover, it could be argued that within Catholicism itself, the reappraisal of the Counter-Reformation headed by Ignatius Loyola served merely to adjust certain of the antinomies at the heart of the Augustinian system, rather than replacing the entire framework.

However, although the Augustinian perception of history has survived (largely through its relationship with organized religion) to constitute an important influence on modern Western historical interpretation, its position had been challenged from the time of the Renaissance with the first attempts at secular political thought. Marsilius of Padua (1270-1343) argued in his Defensor Pacis that

15. Book V, Chapter 21.

16. Dino Bigongiari in Henry Paolucci (ed.), The Political Writings of St. Augustine (Chicago: Henry Regnery and Co., 1962), p. 357.

17. Quoted in R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (London: John Murray, 1960), p. 108.

reason and faith could not, despite the formulations of Thomas Aquinas, be harmonized, and that the separation of revelation and reason constituted the basis for a separation of temporal and spiritual authority.

Building on this distinction, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) proceeded to seek the solutions to political and historical inquiry from within society itself. He argued that human affairs are governed by two factors, *fortuna* and *virtù*, both of which are socially and politically (rather than spiritually) contingent. *Fortuna* (to use Bernard Crick's definition) "is the sudden, awful and challenging piling up of social factors and contingent political events in an unexpected way."¹⁸

Against the unpredictable force of *fortuna* is pitted the conscious human element of *virtù*; the prowess, strength and wisdom of the prince, whose valour and ability is founded on a political morality which lends itself to political stability and the maintenance of the state.

In The Prince, Machiavelli ponders over the relative importance of these two factors in the operation of history:

I am not unaware that many have held and hold the opinion that events are controlled by fortune and by God in such a way that the prudence of men cannot modify them, indeed that men have no influence whatsoever. Because of this, they would conclude that there is no point in sweating over things, but that one should submit to the rulings of chance...Sometimes, when thinking of this, I have myself inclined to this same opinion. Nonetheless, so as not to rule out our free will, I believe that it is probably true that fortune is the arbiter of half the things we do, leaving the other half or so to be controlled by ourselves.¹⁹

Machiavelli's contribution to Western historical interpretation must be seen as this redirection of attention to man's conscious activities

18. Niccolò Machiavelli (edited and with an introduction by Bernard Crick), The Discourses (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 56.

19. Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p. 130.

as a major element in the historical process. Within certain limits, man is capable of altering and influencing his social and political environment; if he is to a certain extent at the mercy of certain forces, those forces are at least physical, political or social, rather than spiritual.

Machiavelli's emphasis on the ability of man to influence history makes him, in Crick's opinion, "distinctively modern", and logically preceding the work of Karl Marx.²⁰ For Marx also was concerned to redirect historical inquiry away from theistic conceptions and to emphasise the centrality of human activity in the unfolding of the historical process. In contradistinction to Machiavelli, however, Marx was not prepared to concede that a major integer in the historical equation (such as Machiavelli's *fortuna*) was not susceptible to a reasoned and scientific historical analysis. On the contrary, the historical process was, like the natural world, subject to certain laws of development, and through the application of a materialist historiography those laws might be revealed. Marx's emphasis on the role of the material aspects of social life in shaping historical development (to an analysis of which we will subsequently turn) has lead to charges that his conception of history was either "monist" or "determinist", or both. However, before such charges are too hastily levelled at Marx, it is opportune to reflect on the type of historical interpretation against which Marx juxtaposed his own methodology, and which was eventually largely superseded by the Marxist approach.

Like St. Augustine, Hegel (1770-1831) believed that history has a plot, and that it was the task of the philosopher to discern that

20. Crick, Op. cit., p. 17.

plot. For Hegel, the plot of human history involved a process through which mankind made spiritual and moral progress, advancing to a state of self-knowledge in which ultimately there would cease to be a distinction between man's existence and his essence. The movement in history towards that goal was essentially a movement towards the realization of human freedom. This process was not, however, ordained by man himself, but was a function of the World Spirit or Idea, which employed the history of man as a vehicle for the manifestation of its own journey of self-realization. In Hegel's Philosophy of Right (1821), the state is portrayed as the social structure in which the ethical intent of the World Spirit or Idea is most closely approximated at that stage in historical development, and it is through the state that its process of self-realization in history finds immediate manifestation. Hegel perceived the state as something of a conduit for the translation of this process of self-realization into manifest historical and social terms. The political institutions which constituted the state were thus presented as determinants of the nature of society and the political sentiment of its citizens. In Hegel's system also, "world historical individuals" (or the great men of history) were, like the state, perceived as possible mediums for translating the higher purpose of world history into tangible historical forms. Again, however, Hegel's view of such "world historical individuals" differs from Carlyle's view of the "heroes" of history, for the Hegelian position imposed the limitations of agency on such individuals, regarding them as intermediaries in the development of history and as spokesmen for their age, articulating the purpose of history at that stage in its development.²¹

To understand the radical break Marx effected with this Hegelian

21. See George Hegel, Philosophy of Right, trans. T. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 155-223.

tradition, it is necessary to examine briefly the writings of the early 1840's, and especially his Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State of 1843. In this Critique, Marx was to dissect the essential features of the Hegelian system, and reveal the fanciful assumptions which supported the entire philosophical edifice. Hegel's long and abstruse interpretation is demonstrated by Marx to be based on empirically false assumptions, resulting from an inversion of the appropriate philosophical and logical premises. In Hegel's view of history, man was not the subject, the prime actor and motivator of social and economic change and development, but an unfortunate predicate functioning as the manifestation of the process of self-realization of the World Spirit. Because of this unwarranted inversion of subject and predicate by Hegel, history was presented (as it were) back to front; consequently, "what should be a starting-point becomes a mystical result and what should be a rational result becomes a mystical starting point."²² Because of this unjustified inversion of premises, "reality" became the creature of, and was provided rationality by the World Spirit, rather than deriving its significance and rationality through its own independent and innate objectivity. As Marx pointed out, "reality is not deemed to be itself but another reality instead. The ordinary empirical world is not governed by its own mind but a mind alien to it."²³

This Critique of 1843 is therefore of importance for it demonstrates Marx's disenchantment with the premises of Hegel's approach to the analysis of history, and signals an intention to invert the relationship between the Hegelian subject and predicate. The consequence of this inversion was ultimately to be the formulation of a conception of

22. Karl Marx, Early Writings (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p. 100.

23. Ibid., p. 62.

history in which man and his life-fulfilling activities came to constitute the subject of history. At this stage, however, the notion of a materialist conception of history is merely adumbrated in seminal form,²⁴ and it is probable that Marx's rebellion against the Hegelian tradition was motivated initially by his radical humanism which could not tolerate the conservatism implicit within the Hegelian system.

The Critique is also of importance for it clearly indicates the type of historical system against which Marx was to juxtapose his own. Consequently, when Marx was later to reject abstract ideas as the moving force in historical development, it was the deistic spectres, the "phantoms of men's minds" (suggested within the Hegelian philosophy) to which Marx was referring. As we shall see, Marx did not deny that ideas in the form of political consciousness could function as agents for historical change and development, and even during this early rebellion against the Hegelian position, he was to indicate the possibility that such consciousness could have a causal effectivity under certain conditions; "...theory also becomes a material force once it has gripped the masses"²⁵, for "the proletariat finds its intellectual weapons in philosophy."²⁶

Marx continued his criticism of the Hegelian position, and broadened his attack to include the speculative critical philosophy of the Young Hegelians in his article of 1843-44 entitled "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction." In this article, Marx was to stress the importance of redirecting historical

24. Ibid., pp. 146-7.

25. Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," in Ibid., p. 251.

26. Ibid., p. 257. Emphasis in original.

inquiry away from divine or metaphysical explanations to the real world in which man himself was the originator of historical actions leading to change and development. In so doing, Marx formulated what was for him the true task of both philosophy and history:

It is the task of history...to establish the truth of this world. It is the immediate task of philosophy, which is in the service of history, to unmask self-estrangement in its unholy forms once the holy form of human self-estrangement has been unmasked. Thus the criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of earth...²⁷

It is evident from this quotation that Marx perceived the task of philosophy and history as incorporating two dimensions; the first to divest divine interpretations of their historical verisimilitude, and the second to expose those social arrangements (the "unholy forms") which militated against the unification of human existence and essence. The notion of a "self-estrangement" in these terms indicates, however, that Marx was still (in some senses) labouring within the confines of the Hegelian concepts which it was his intention to overthrow.

Marx's inversion of the Hegelian subject-predicate was to culminate eventually (and perhaps logically) in an explanation of the historical process which took as its point of departure the material process of "production and reproduction" in social and economic life. While Marx had, in the Critique of 1843, emphasized "political sentiment" (the predicate in the Hegelian system) as representing the historical subject, it was not long before Marx perceived as necessary an extension of the logic of that position to assert labour as central to the historical process. The conception of labour thus came to be a central theme of Marx's view of history, and he regarded it as the one supra-

27. Ibid., pp. 244-5. Emphasis in original.

epochal element of human existence, persistent throughout history. Marx's conception of labour as the vital mediating process between man and nature through which man gains access to the means of survival, emerges early in his writings and remains a persistent and consistent feature of his method of historical inquiry. In the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, this theme emerged and was linked to the concept of history:

But since for socialist man the whole of what is called world history is nothing more than the creation of man through human labour, and the development of nature for man, he therefore has palpable and incontrovertible proof of his self-mediated birth, of his process of emergence.²⁸

Again, in his later works, this theme appears and re-appears. In the "Introduction" to the Grundrisse (1857), Marx refers to the conception of labour in its general form as being "immeasurably old";²⁹ and in Volume I of Capital, the universality of labour as a condition of all societies is constantly emphasized. "Labour," Marx declared, "is a condition of human existence which is independent of all forms of society; it is an eternal natural necessity which mediates the metabolism between man and nature, and therefore human life itself."³⁰ Elsewhere in that same source, Marx was to reiterate that the "labour process...is the universal condition for the metabolic interaction between man and nature, the everlasting nature-imposed condition of human existence, and it is therefore independent of every form of existence, or rather it is common to all forms of society in which human beings live."³¹

28. Ibid., p. 357. Emphasis in original.

29. Karl Marx, Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 103.

30. Karl Marx, Capital (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976) I, p. 133.

31. Ibid., p. 290.

It was Marx's conviction of the need to acknowledge, for purposes of historical inquiry, the centrality of the labour process and the type of relationships between the human beings involved in it, that was to lead to his rupture, not only with the Young Hegelians, but with Feuerbach and Marx's friend Ruge. For even Feuerbach, who had pioneered the path of modern materialism, insisted on an abstraction of man which transcended man *qua* labourer, the living life-pursuing subject of history, and which led to a form of contemplative materialism which suffered from many of the defects of the Hegelian system. Likewise, Ruge's analysis of the Silesian weavers' rising which occurred in mid-1844 prompted Marx to criticize Ruge for his failure to actually analyse the social and economic conditions under which the Silesian weavers worked, and on the basis of that analysis to suggest the potential for revolution that such conditions engendered; for only through a revolutionary transformation within the civil society would qualitative changes be rendered in the state mechanism:

Confronted with the initial outbreak of the Silesian revolt, no man who thinks and who loves the truth could regard the duty to play schoolmaster to the event as his primary task. On the contrary, his duty would rather be to study it to discover its specific character. Of course, this requires scientific understanding and a certain love of mankind...³²

What is of importance and interest here is Marx's insistence that the "specific character" of an historical situation must be analysed and disclosed. It will become apparent as this study unfolds that Mao Zedong also shared this preoccupation with the necessity of disclosing the "specific character" of historical events or periods. It must be

32. Karl Marx, "Critical Notes on the Article 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian'," in Early Writings, p. 416. Emphasis in original.

stressed, however, that for neither Mao nor Marx did this emphasis on the disclosure of the "specific character" of historical events or periods preclude the utilization of a theory of history which had a more general application, one which could be employed to disclose the "specific character" of very different occurrences or eras in history. It is quite evident that Marx was no crude empiricist, and that he approached the study of the empirical from a definite and articulated theoretical perspective. That theoretical perspective was essentially a materialist perspective which perceived labour and the relationships which grew out of the labour process as the central and dominant feature of history. As Marx and Engels were to stress in The German Ideology, "The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself... Therefore in any interpretation of history one has first of all to observe this fundamental fact in all its significance and all its implications and to accord it its due importance."³³

For Marx, therefore, any interpretation of history not only had as its purpose the disclosure of the "specific character" of the event or society under examination, it had to perform this function by attributing "due importance" to the "production of material life" which underlay that event or characterized that society. Of course, one of the problems with this position (and one which has bedevilled subsequent Marxists including Mao Zedong) is not only the problem of defining what constitutes "the production of material life", but the difficult proposition of establishing what constitutes "due importance". In order to provide some bench-mark or reference point for our subsequent analysis of Mao's approach to the interpretation of

33. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), pp. 48-9. Emphasis added.

history, it is consequently important to attempt a necessarily brief reconstruction of how Marx perceived this historically generative area of social life, and its causal links with other "non-material" areas of social life. Because Mao had (as was argued earlier) repudiated many central features of the traditional Chinese approach to historical interpretation, it was to Marxism that he turned in order to allow him the insights he gained into this historical process. It is therefore necessary to provide an interpretation of the mode of historical inquiry within Marx's writings, for we will be concerned with how Mao himself perceived, selected and utilized certain aspects of the Marxist conception of social structure and function, and the way in which Mao perceived the different elements of society (identified largely in Marxist terms) as interacting causally to create change and development.

It is commonly asserted that Marx viewed society as constituted of an economic base upon which is superimposed a superstructure constituted of the remaining (non-economic) elements of society. This view, deriving essentially from Marx's position revealed in the 1859 "Preface" to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, while not necessarily inaccurate, can lead to some confusion. This confusion arises because the economic base frequently is too narrowly defined, excessively compressing the broad conception of economics held by Marx; for the concept of economics as employed by Marx encompassed a broad area of human activity which extended well into what is now generally comprehended as constituting the social and political realm. The economic base was not for Marx "technology" as such, but included man as the consciously creative labourer whose consciousness is crucial to what he can and wants to create. In order

to facilitate an elucidation of economics in the broad perspective held by Marx, the following analysis will not employ the discrete base/superstructure dichotomy, but posit and utilize instead a three-tiered arrangement of society, an arrangement explicit within the Marxist cannons themselves, and which demonstrates more clearly that Marx perceived "the production of material life" as a broad area of human activity whose influence was felt in the other "non-material" areas of society. This mode of explication is also useful, for we will have cause to note the frequency with which Mao also employed a tripartite schema in his analysis of social structure and function.

In The German Ideology, Marx and Engels referred to the "three moments" which constituted the entire edifice of human society.³⁴

These "three moments" consisted of "the forces of production, the state of society, and consciousness."³⁵ This tripartite division of society was again indicated clearly in the following passage from The Poverty of Philosophy (1846-47):

...definite social relations are just as much produced by men as linen, flax, etc. Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations...The same men who establish their social relations in conformity with their material productivity, produce also principles, ideas and categories, in conformity with their social relations.

Thus these ideas, these categories, are as little eternal as the relations they express. They are historical and transitory products.

There is continual movement of growth in productive forces, of destruction in social relations, of formation in ideas...³⁶

34. Ibid., p. 52.

35. Ibid.

36. Karl Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1955), pp. 95-6. Emphasis in original.

The characteristics attributed by Marx to these "three moments" (the forces of production, social relations, and "consciousness") need to be provided with some detail. Let us look firstly at the forces of production.

For Marx, the forces of production encompassed those elements of the process whereby man exerts himself over nature, opposes himself to it and wrests from it the material means of subsistence and the further development of society. This process, the labour process proper (what Marx occasionally termed the "immediate process of production"), was analyzed in most detail in Volume I of Capital.³⁷ Here Marx discerned within this process purposeful activity (the work itself), the object on which that work is performed, and the instruments of that work.³⁸ Although the form that the purposeful activity (or labour) might take would vary from one mode of production to another, labour itself was (as we have seen) the one feature which Marx believed to remain constant within that process. Labour is, Marx averred, a "process between man and nature, a process by which man, through his own actions, mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism between himself and nature."³⁹ The objects on which labour is performed are provided from the earth itself, from nature's bounty, which Marx described as "the great workshop",⁴⁰ and man's "original larder and tool house."⁴¹ The availability of natural resources for human exploitation, and the type of natural environment evident, constitute an important

37. See in particular "Results of the Immediate Process of Production," the appendix to Capital I, pp. 948-1084.

38. Capital I, p. 284.

39. Ibid., p. 283.

40. Grundrisse, p. 472.

41. Capital I, p. 285.

(in some cases decisive) formative and limiting influence on the development of society.⁴² "The writing of history," Marx and Engels had emphasized in The German Ideology, "must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men."⁴³

It is, however, the instruments of labour which Marx appeared to attribute with the greatest influence within this labour process. For it is the type of instrument utilized which to a large extent determines the type of purposeful activity necessary, and the kind of objects of labour required and utilized. Marx defined an instrument of labour as "a thing, or a complex of things, which the worker interposes between himself and the object of his labour and which serves as a conductor, directing his activity onto that object."⁴⁴ The level of sophistication of the instrument of labour will have a direct impact on the degree of mastery man can attain over nature, and thus the type of quality of existence within a given society and historical epoch. Moreover, adjustments required by transformations and developments within the technology of the instruments of labour could lead to the dissolution of outmoded work methods, and the disappearance of economic practices and structures rendered anachronistic through such developments. Consequently, Marx was very conscious of the role that different forms of machinery could play in the process of historical development and change. In The Poverty of Philosophy, Marx had made reference to this in his well known and seemingly rather

42. On this point, see Marian Sawer, Marxism and the Asiatic Mode of Production (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), esp. Chapter III.

43. The German Ideology, p. 42.

44. Capital I, p. 285.

mechanistic summation; "The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist."⁴⁵

In Volume I of Capital, however, Marx was to proceed to devote much attention to the various forms of machinery which had characterized early capitalism, and the role that these had occupied in the type of society developing in Western Europe. In this analysis, Marx perceived the Industrial Revolution commencing with John Wyatt's invention of the spinning machine in 1735;⁴⁶ the appearance of such new forms of the instruments of labour could thus, in Marx's view, act as a catalyst for economic and social change. He assumed, however, that the emergence of a new machine or technological development would only have such an impact if a well-developed and receptive social and economic infrastructure was already in existence. Thus, it was no accident that the Industrial Revolution (whose catalyst seemed the appearance of Wyatt's spinning machine) commenced at a stage when the feudal system was in decline, and there had already been an increase in commercial activity, as well as a large increase in the volume of world trade. Neither was it an accident that the fabulous inventions of earlier centuries, such as those of Leonardo da Vinci, had remained paper fantasies with virtually no historical impact.

The kind of productive forces in operation within a society required suitable and corresponding forms of work habits. Under a mode of production characterized by handicraft production, the artisan had been the dominant work form, with the skill to undertake every aspect of complete production of an article. Under large-scale industrial production, a division of labour and thus cooperation

45. The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 95.

46. Capital I, p. 493; and see footnote 4.

became essential at the point of production. Consequently, distinct and appropriate social patterns and relationships emerged from the operation of the forces of production, and it is these relationships which constitute the second "tier" of Marx's conception of social structure. The link between the productive forces and this network of social relationships was an intimate one for Marx; however, while he may have perceived the instruments of labour within the forces of production as being largely responsible for the initial generation of such social relations, he insisted that they were causally interconnected, the forces of production themselves being subject to the influence of those social relations. Civil society, as Marx was to refer to such relations in their totality, was not the passive and pliant product of the forces of production, and the reciprocal causal relationship he perceived was to be made quite clear in the following passage from The German Ideology:

The form of intercourse determined by the existing productive forces at all previous historical stages, and in its turn determining these, is civil society...civil society is the true source and theatre of all history, and how absurd is the conception of history held hitherto, which neglects the real relationships and confines itself to high-sounding dramas of princes and states.

Civil society embraces the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite stage of productive forces...Civil society as such only develops with the bourgeoisie; the social organization evolving directly out of production and commerce, which in all ages forms the basis of the State and of the rest of the idealistic super-structure, has, however, always been designated by the same name.⁴⁷

From this passage, it seems evident that Marx perceived a combination of the forces of production and the civil society (that is,

47. The German Ideology, p. 57. Emphasis added.

the totality of social relations growing out of the forces of production) as being the generative "basis" which gave rise to not only the political institutions which constituted the state, but the entire "idealistic superstructure" of society. It is consequently of some importance to establish what Marx had in mind when he referred to the social aspects and relationships which constituted this second "tier" of social structure.

As with his insistence on the centrality of labour to all forms of human existence, Marx also insisted on the social character of man's existence. Society was not merely an aggregation of isolated individuals, and he rejected the possibility that the individual could (as the Behaviouralists now claim) constitute the empirical unit for social analysis. After all, the "individual is," Marx asserted in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, "the social being."⁴⁸ Marx could not conceive of the individual as an abstract entity, but only as a social being whose existence was largely defined by the social structures and relationships within which he emerged and existed. His attack on the concept of the "Robinsonade" of classical political economy was predicated on the belief that man is first and foremost a social animal, and that to derive "laws" from the anticipated behaviour of man living in isolation was a ludicrous and futile exercise.⁴⁹ Marx's belief in man *qua* social animal remained a persistent element of his analysis, and on several occasions he was to employ a variation on the Aristotelian theme to make his point; "...the fact (is) that man, if not as Aristotle thought a political animal, is at

48. Early Writings, p. 350. Emphasis in original.

49. Capital I, pp. 169-171; see also Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p. 44, footnote 1.

all events a social animal."⁵⁰ And in the "Introduction" to the Grundrisse, Marx declared that "the human being is in the most literal sense a *zoon politikon*, not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society."⁵¹ What gave man this inherently social characteristic was his unique capacity to cooperate for the attainment of shared goals, and especially the pursuit of livelihood through labour. "By social," Marx and Engels declared in The German Ideology, "we understand the cooperation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end."⁵²

The social relationships which grow out of a certain mode of the forces of production are constituted of two basic types. The first of these is the relationship which exists between the producing individuals at the point of production; that is, social relations of an intra-class character. Under a capitalist mode of production, this would incorporate the division of labour amongst the individuals of the producing class, and their cooperation within an industrial process to produce a finished commodity. Marx perceived this form of social relationship as extremely important in not only the objective definition of a class, but also as an important factor in creating a potential for a shared subjective appreciation of a communality of interests by members of a class. The capacity for socially cooperative labour at the point of production as best exemplified under capitalism, and a shared perception of a communality of interest by the producing class, were to constitute important reasons for Marx's attribution of a vital historical role to the industrial proletariat; for it was the

50. Capital I, p. 444; see also Early Writings, p. 201.

51. Grundrisse, p. 84.

52. The German Ideology, p. 50.

social character of that production which would contribute to the eventual establishment of a social system in which ownership and production would be harmonized, and in which both would be characterized by their social (as opposed to private) nature.

The second form of social relationship is that based on the criterion of ownership of the means of production. Marx argued that history had demonstrated that in all societies (save the most primitive) a small minority of the individuals within a society owned the means of production. This owning class, the class holding the economic resources of society, could impose its will on the remaining members of society who, through the need to survive were forced to subordinate themselves to this dominant economic class, and to provide labour and to produce for the benefit of this class. Society, and social relationships, were thus characterized by a fundamental cleavage between classes differentiated on the criterion of ownership of the means of production. The relationship between owning and producing classes was naturally enough characterized by antagonism and hostility, and it was this hostility which engendered the class struggle which constituted for Marx the factor which created historical change and development. Whether such inter-class tension and struggle was for Marx an aspect of civil society proper remains to be seen. However, intra-class activity to establish cohesion, unity and heightened class consciousness (which entails much of what we might now describe as "political") was indeed a social function for Marx. That such intra-class activity is properly classified within the second "tier" of our analysis can be demonstrated most readily by reference to Marx's conception of "class".

Marx conceived of a class in two ways, and his conception indicates

a dialectical perception of a social aggregate in the process of self-realization. The first moment of class formation consists in the creation of a given collectivity of human beings who are characterized by shared sociological and economic attributes. At this stage, members of this class may not identify subjectively with others in like situation. For various reasons (geographic, cultural, linguistic, and so on), there may be little if any shared perception of an identity of interests. Only when there is such a subjective perception of shared interests and a consequent volition for common action does the class come to constitute a "class for itself". This process represents the second moment. Marx was to refer to the French peasantry during the 1848-50 upheavals as displaying the objective external criteria of a class, but at the same time (due to a lack of subjectively perceived identity of interests) not representing a "class for itself":

In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their cultural life from those of other classes and bring them into conflict with those classes, they form a class. In so far as these small peasant proprietors are merely connected on a local basis, and the identity of their interests fails to produce a feeling of community, national links, or a political organization, they do not form a class. They are therefore incapable of asserting their class interest in their own name...⁵³

The process of a class becoming a "class for itself" is depicted most clearly in Marx's description (which appears in The Poverty of Philosophy) of the growing cohesion and unity of purpose of the industrial proletariat. During the incipient stage of capitalism, the newly formed industrial working class, wrenched from the clearly defined social relations of feudal society, at first represents only an

53. Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in Surveys from Exile (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 239.

inchoate semblance of the modern proletariat. This flotsam and jetsam from the disintegration of the feudal order share certain sociological and economic characteristics, most notably a forced cooperation at the point of production and the exploitation characteristic of the labour condition under capitalism. In this situation, "this mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle...the mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class."⁵⁴ In this process, the proletariat employs amongst other means the combination of workers into trade unions to organize itself as a class.⁵⁵ Importantly, Marx argues that at the point at which the unity and purpose of the proletariat is such that it constitutes a "class for itself", its association takes on a political character, and the subsequent confrontation with the opposing class becomes a political struggle.⁵⁶

It would therefore seem evident that the process in which a class progressed from being a "class in itself" to being a "class for itself" incorporated for Marx aspects of social behaviour which are clearly political in the broad sense (such as the organization of trade unions). Consequently, it is certainly misleading to interpret Marx as regarding all political activity as residing necessarily in the superstructure of society; indeed, rather than perceiving a discrete dichotomy between an economic base and a politico-ideological superstructure, Marx's dialectical approach to class formation predisposed him to regard that which was political as overlaying this supposed divide between base and superstructure, and constituting a link providing concatenation between social relations (or the relations of production) on the one hand, and the more obvious superstructural forms

54. The Poverty of Philosophy , p. 150.

55. Ibid., p. 151.

56. Ibid., pp. 150-1.

and institutions on the other. This possibly imprecise role accorded to politics in the broader sense has implications for our subsequent analysis of Mao Zedong's appreciation of the historical role of the political realm, and we will see that Mao tended to equivocate at various times not only on its definitional character, but also on the degree of causal historical effectivity to accord it.

The intra-class struggle to establish the "class for itself", and the classes that make up civil society, would seem therefore to constitute aspects of the social relations of production, and therefore validly placed within the second "tier" of Marx's view of social structure. However, the overt struggle between classes was characterized by Marx as a political struggle, and it appears that Marx perceived this inter-class political struggle as being within the third "tier" of the social structure, that which he referred to variously as the superstructure, ideological forms, or "consciousness". The superstructural character of inter-class political struggle was emphasized most clearly in the 1859 "Preface" to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy; "...it is always necessary," Marx asserted, "to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic--in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out."⁵⁷ It is indeed somewhat ironic that this "Preface" has so frequently been interpreted as suggesting the relative impotence of the political realm in historical terms. Yet, overt conflict between classes is, according to Marx, channelled through and fought out by political organizations established to represent and defend class

57. Early Writings, p. 426. Emphasis added.

interests. Consequently, the hostility of the subordinate class (as expressed and channelled through political forms) would most notably be directed against the state itself, this political institution functioning at a superstructural level on behalf of the dominant economic class. As a result, any conflict between the state and subordinate class would have to occur in the superstructure, in the arena in which "men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out."

In Marx's conception of society it would thus appear that conflict between classes is basically a political struggle, and carried out as an essentially ideological and political response to perceptions of class interest. If this is the case, are we to assume that the immediate (as opposed to the more long-term and fundamental) cause for conflict finds origin in the "consciousness" of men? Our reconstruction of Marx's position suggests that such must be the case. It must be noted, however, that Marx perceived such "consciousness" and the activities engendered by it as being in the final analysis a function of structures (and changes to such structures) within the principal causally generative area of society--the combination (causally interconnected) of the forces of production and social relations (that is, as these have been given broad definition above as the first and second "tiers" in our analysis). The relationship between such material factors and "consciousness" was not, in Marx's view, always or even often subject to simple and ready definition; the historian nevertheless had to seek out this relationship in order to provide an accurate and objective explanation of historical events perhaps explained or rationalized by the historical actors themselves by reference to considerations at some remove from explicit class and material interests. The necessity for the historian to seek out this

relationship was made clear by Marx in his analysis of the period of revolutionary upheaval in France between 1848-51. The objective class interests of the groups and individuals involved in the political turmoil of this confused period tended to be overlaid with subjective rationalizations which deflected attention from the real determinants of political behaviour:

Who would deny that at the same time old memories, personal enmities, fears and hopes, prejudices and illusions, sympathies and antipathies, convictions, articles of faith and principles bound them to one or the other royal house? A whole superstructure of different and specifically formed feelings, illusions, modes of thought and views of life arises on the basis of the different forms of property, of the social conditions of existence. The whole class creates and forms these out of its material foundations and the corresponding social relations. The single individual, who derives these feelings, etc. through tradition and upbringing, may well imagine that they form the real determinants and the starting-point of his activity.⁵⁸

Thus, although the immediate catalyst for political action emanated from a consciousness objectively related to class structure and interest, that factor might not be immediately apparent to the political actor himself. The point remains, however, that while occurrences within the superstructure may have been for Marx only capable of complete explanation by reference to the generative "basis" of society, this does not signify that he lightly dismissed the superstructure as unimportant for purposes of historical analysis. The fact that class-derived conflict manifested itself as a political struggle within the confines of the superstructure indicates that for Marx the superstructure constituted an arena within which conflict and contradiction emerged in its most explicit form and could find

58. Surveys from Exile, pp. 173-4.

resolution. Therefore, while the historian would necessarily seek out underlying and perhaps concealed reasons for evident superstructural conflict, a complete understanding of the "specific character" of any historical event or period could not lightly dispense with the constitution and function of the superstructure in its capacity to provide historical causation of a more immediate nature. Superstructural factors thus stood in an intermediate position in the causal link between developments in the productive forces and their corresponding social relations, and the explicit manifestation and resolution of those changes in political (or other--religious, legal, cultural) forms. For it was only through consciousness, however subjectively constituted, that changes in the material foundation of society could be perceived and translated into these superstructural forms and conflict.

Let us round off this brief interpretation of Marx's position on causality in the historical process by reference to just a few of the elements that he perceived as characterizing the superstructure, or third "tier" of our analysis; the state, religion, and legal processes.

For Marx, the fact that the ruling economic class was invested with economic power meant that this class was able to translate that economic dominance into political forms; consequently the state as a complex of political institutions found its origin and purpose in the class interests of this dominant economic class. In most explicit references to the state, Marx characterized it in this manner, as essentially a political extension of the economic power of the dominant class, and in both structure and function constituted to serve the interests of that class. From the wording utilized by Marx and Engels

in The German Ideology, it seems evident that they perceived a direct connection between economic power and the formation and operation of the state:

The material life of individuals, which certainly does not depend on their mere "will", their mode of production, and their form of intercourse, which reciprocally influence each other, are the real basis of the State. This material life is, at every stage in which the division of labour and private property are still necessary, quite independent of the will of individuals. These real conditions are not created by the State power; they are rather the power which creates it. The individuals who rule under these conditions, quite apart from the fact that their power has to constitute itself as a State, must give their will, as it is determined by these definite circumstances, a general expression as the will of the state, as law. The content of this expression is always determined by the situation of this class, as is most clearly revealed in the civil and criminal law.⁵⁹

As a consequence of this position, Marx and Engels were to perceive the state in capitalist society as "but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie";⁶⁰ and in Volume I of Capital, Marx was to refer to the state as "ruled by capitalist and landlord."⁶¹ Therefore, despite the equivocations of some subsequent Marxists (such as Althusser and Poulantzas) it would seem apparent that Marx perceived an intimate connection between the ruling economic class and the activities of the state. This connection (like the relationship between objective class interest and a particular political action) might not however be capable of simple or obvious explanation; such a connection could nevertheless be assumed to exist and had to

59. T.B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel (eds.), Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), pp. 231-2. Emphasis in original.

60. "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in Karl Marx, The Revolutions of 1848 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), pp. 67-8.

61. Capital I, p. 348.

be sought out by the historian concerned to reveal the reasons for actions taken by the state. The difficulty of empirically establishing that connection could not be accepted as a reason for attributing some (unspecified) degree of autonomy to the state, but signified rather that the historian had to intensify his efforts to expose the connection between class and state.

To assert this intimate connection between the ruling economic class and the state in Marx's thought is not to suggest that he underestimated the power which the state could wield. The very fact that the economic power of the dominant class was translatable into the political power of the state suggested to Marx that the latter could be as formidable politically as the former was economically. Indeed, Marx was under no illusion as to the power which the state could wield, and in Volume I of Capital he paid deference to the "power of the state, the concentrated and organized force of society," to pursue historical goals in the interests of the ruling economic class.⁶²

Marx also regarded religion and the religious sentiment as an element of this third "tier" or "ideological superstructure". His repudiation of the historical role of the World Spirit of the Hegelian philosophy was readily transferrable to the Christian deity and the mysticism accompanying many religions. It was (as we have seen) the unwarranted inversion by Hegel of philosophical subject and predicate to which Marx had objected, and he was to apply the same criterion to religious explanations of history; "...in religion at the ideological level (there is)...the inversion of subject into object and vice versa."⁶³

62. Ibid., p. 915.

63. Capital I, p. 990. Emphasis in original.

Marx did not, however, deny the sway that religion could have over men's minds, and he believed that "man is governed, in religion, by the products of his own brain."⁶⁴ What Marx was concerned to deny was that religious beliefs were autonomous social phenomena; they were rather ideological manifestations of material and especially class conditions at the superstructural level. Rather than creating society, religion was a product of it. Marx had admonished Feuerbach for not recognizing "that the 'religious sentiment' is itself a social product,"⁶⁵ and the primacy of material factors in shaping such religious responses indicated to Marx that "morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence."⁶⁶

Another feature that Marx included in the "ideological superstructure" was the juridical system. This was, Marx believed, an evident expression of social and economic relationships. As Marx was to point out in the "Introduction" to the Grundrisse, "every form of production creates its own legal relations."⁶⁷ Moreover, a juridical relationship which takes the form of a contract is in essence "a relation between two wills which mirrors the economic situation. The content of this juridical relation...is itself determined by the economic relation."⁶⁸

It becomes obvious from this very brief survey of some elements of the superstructure that Marx did not appear inclined to attribute it with any immunity from influence by the generative "basis" of

64. Ibid., p. 772.

65. Early Writings, p. 423.

66. The German Ideology, p. 47.

67. Grundrisse, p. 88.

68. Capital I, p. 178.

society, the forces of production and their corresponding forms of social relations. Of course, Marx did observe that the state, religion, or the legal system might appear to be undertaking an action seemingly independent of objective class considerations; in such a case, however, Marx was concerned to inquire what underpinned such apparently autonomous behaviour, and to expose the perhaps hidden or submerged connection between superstructural function and the material "basis". The behaviour of historical actors and organizations was motivated by this material connection, and any appearance of historical autonomy could not be readily accepted at face value.

Are we to believe, however, that Marx did not regard the elements of the superstructure as possessing any capacity to influence historical action and development? We have observed that Marx perceived the manifestation of class conflict in its most explicit form as taking a political or ideological, and hence superstructural, form. Thus, the historian concerned to understand the "specific character" of an historical context could not lightly disregard that manifestation. It would seem also, that by allowing that conflict generated within the material "basis" of society could find resolution in superstructural forms, Marx was indicating that such superstructural forms could render some influence on the subsequent development of society as a whole; that is, that the productive forces and their social relations were influenced in their own development by the nature and degree of resolution of conflict within the superstructure. This potential influence of the superstructure to influence developments in other areas of society seems apparent in Marx's reference to the role of the state in hastening the primitive accumulation of capital during the early stages of capitalism:

These methods (for the primitive accumulation of capital) depend in part on brute force, for instance the colonial system. But they all employ the power of the state, the concentrated and organized force of society, to hasten, as in a hothouse, the transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition.⁶⁹

It is also clear that Marx regarded the state and its concomitant juridical and ideological systems as performing the important function of reinforcing and consolidating dominant economic formations and practices.⁷⁰

It is a moot point, however, whether Marx believed that such superstructural influence could have the effect of drastically diverting the direction of development of the material "basis" of society. The quote given immediately above would suggest that the superstructure could hasten (and presumably by the same logic, retard) the pace of development of this material "basis". But it is certainly not evident from Marx's writings that he perceived the superstructure as capable of initiating historical change of major dimensions or a significant alteration in the direction of historical development. Indeed, the impression remains that Marx devoted only modest attention to the historical capabilities of the superstructure, and that this lack of interest was motivated by his belief that the first task in the interpretation of society and historical development was the comprehension of the nature and function of the material "basis" of society--its productive forces and the corresponding relations of production--for it was this that constituted the principal locus of historical generation and causation.

69. Capital I, pp. 915-6.

70. See especially The German Ideology, pp. 64-68.

While it is all very well for many neo-Marxists to now complain that this is a misleading interpretation of Marx's thought, it is nevertheless the case that this in general was how Marx's historical methodology was perceived by many of his followers. This orthodox interpretation of Marxism was to have a significant influence on the political and ideological positions assumed by the Second and Third Internationals, the latter having important implications for the type of Marxism which eventually filtered through to the revolutionary movement in China during the 1920's and early 1930's. One only has to look, for example, at the position adopted by Plekhanov at the turn of the century to discern that what might now be lightly dismissed as a "vulgar" interpretation of Marxism represented the orthodox position of the time; and it was to be within and around this position that Marxist dialogue was pursued.⁷¹ Therefore, to retroactively apply a "modern" (largely European) interpretation of Marxism to earlier periods, and to apply that interpretation as a standard by which to evaluate the thinking of earlier revolutionary Marxists like Mao Zedong, would be to demonstrate a degree of ahistoricity which Marx himself would doubtless have execrated.⁷²

There is no doubt that the form of Marxism adopted by many revolutionaries in the early part of this century contained a strong reductionist tendency; that is, that they perceived historical events and the historical process as strictly and ineluctably reducible to economic explanation. Moreover, if we are to judge from Plekhanov's

71. See especially George Plekhanov, The Materialist Conception of History (New York: International Publishers, 1940).

72. There is more than a touch of such ahistoricity in Andrew G. Walder's interpretation of "Maoism"; see "Marxism, Maoism and Social Change," Modern China, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 1977), pp. 101-118; also Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 125-160.

own position, it is clear that such reductionism was of a much more rigid and narrow form than that outlined in the interpretation of Marx's thought offered above; indeed, Plekhanov's position concentrated on the productive forces (rather than a combination of the productive forces and social relations) as the principal locus of historical causation. There were, of course, contemporaries of Plekhanov who were inclined to utilize a rather more flexible interpretation of Marxism. Lenin, for example, was able (at least to his own satisfaction) to harmonize a rather deterministic acceptance of the schema for historical development through stages mapped out by orthodox Marxism with a strong emphasis on the political aspects of class struggle. This emphasis on the political realm was also combined with an insistence that Marxism had to be utilized as a means of analysis which could reveal the specific characteristics of a particular society; this deference to the particularities of different societies did not, however, extend to the point at which the integrity of Marxism's general blueprint for historical development might be threatened. There were clearly limits, therefore, to the extent of flexibility which even Lenin could attribute to Marxism, and he was inclined, when pressed to give a theoretical summation, to fall back on what he perceived to be a relatively orthodox (and thus safe) rendition of Marxism.⁷³

The point remains, however, that by the time Marxism had found its way into the revolutionary movement in China, the process of the differentiation of Marxism along theoretical (as well as national) lines had already become well established. Consequently, when Chinese Marxists like Mao Zedong were called upon to provide a systematic analysis of their own society and the nature of its historical development, they were faced with something of a dilemma--what was

73. See especially, "The State," in V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1964) XXIX, pp. 475-6.

Marxism and how was it to be applied such that the particularities of Chinese society would be laid bare? Even the assertions by Lenin in his more flexible moments that Marxism had to be used as a mode of analysis rather than dogma, were not particularly helpful; for there still existed a wide area for personal discretion in the interpretation of Marxism as a mode of social and historical analysis.

It is this area of personal discretion which is of particular concern to this study. How did Mao Zedong interpret Marxism as a mode of social and historical analysis? How, for example, did Mao perceive the various elements or structures of society? Did he utilize and apply the economic base/ideological superstructure dichotomy so influential within orthodox Marxism? If so, how?; and if not, what social categories and concepts did he employ to interpret society? Did Mao identify a principal locus of causation within society, and if so, did he provide any clear guidelines as to how the network of causation operated? What role was Mao prepared to attribute to "non-material" (or ideological) factors in social function, and what was the causal relationship he perceived between material and such "non-material" factors? Did Mao recognize the problems inherent in a strictly economic reductionist explanation of history, and if so, what steps did he take to ameliorate such difficulties?

It is questions such as these which this study will attempt to answer. In order to do so, it will be necessary to attempt a definition of the various elements or structures which Mao perceived within society. This necessitates initially the formulation of a somewhat "static" view of society, and it is conceded that this represents something of a methodological liberty in the analysis of Mao's view of society; for one persistent feature of Mao's thought

was that society is a dynamic entity in which there is constant movement and change (if not always development). It is believed that the formulation of this rather "static" definition of the various elements or structures of society will permit, however, a more reasoned and clearly elucidated interpretation of the manner in which Mao perceived these different elements or structures as interacting. The second phase of our analysis will attempt to present just such a dynamic picture, attempting to apprehend a moving picture of the various elements of society set in motion and interacting.

II. Historical Time and the Future

Any historical consciousness presumes a sensitivity to time as one of the contingent aspects of human life and society, for temporality is the dimension which permits the emergence, development and decay of both man and his social organization. Although the development of man and society is contingent upon time, the concept of time is itself contingent upon the definition which man cares to give it. Time is not a physical entity immediately perceptible to the senses, and man's consciousness of time has derived from a cognitive appreciation of change and flux in the external environment. Moreover, when time is perceived in historical terms, the span of time necessarily exceeds the life-span of single generations, and may extend across millenia. The criteria for evaluating the manner and direction in which time "flows" across such vast temporal reaches, and the criteria for dividing that "flow" into historically discrete periods, have varied widely between societies, and within societies at different periods in their history.

That these criteria do vary is clearly evident from even a cursory

comparison of the conception of historical time held by different societies. The traditional Chinese conception of time took as its basis the cycle of natural change through the seasons, and the regular motions of the celestial bodies.⁷⁴ When applied to human history, the cyclical conception of time appeared reinforced by the seeming recurring sequence of dynastic progression passing as it did through periods of growth, maturity and decay like any other life cycle. This cyclical conception of history appeared in various forms in Chinese historical writing; Xun Zi, for example, perceived history as a series of circles passing repeatedly through the same or similar points, while Si-Ma Qian perceived patterns of history as being constantly repeated, but not necessarily returning to the temporal point of origin.⁷⁵ One of the consequences of such cyclical conceptions of history was the marked tendency in Chinese historiography towards temporal transcendency, the inclination to regard historical lessons as not limited temporally or circumscribed by the era in which they found generation. Consequently, the "praise and blame" characteristic of Chinese historical writing could seek out and utilize salutary examples of proper and improper conduct with no concern about the possible specific and differentiating features of the period within which that behaviour occurred. This tendency towards temporal transcendency is clearly evident in the historical writings of Si-Ma Qian,⁷⁶ the early medieval Confucianist Xun Yue,⁷⁷ Liu Zhiji and Si-Ma Guang,⁷⁸ as well

74. Nathan Sivin, "Chinese Conceptions of Time," Earlham Review I (1966), p. 82.

75. Burton Watson, Ssu-ma Ch'ien..., Op. cit., pp. 142-3, 153.

76. Ibid., p. 153.

77. Chi-yun Chen, Hsün Yüeh (A.D. 148-209): The Life and Reflections of an Early Medieval Confucianist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 135.

78. Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical...", in Beasley and Pulleyblank (eds.), Op. cit., pp. 144, 153-4.

as the great Qing historian Zhang Xuecheng.⁷⁹

Another important consequence of such cyclical conceptions of historical time was a radically diminished perception of cosmic progress. Until the arrival of Buddhism, traditional Chinese conceptions of time did not, by and large, incorporate the assumption that the cosmos and man's position within it were necessarily heading in any given direction or were improving.⁸⁰ This diminished notion of progress or development was also a function of the Chinese belief in the existence of a legendary golden age of the distant past to which all succeeding dynasties were necessarily inferior;⁸¹ and indeed there is a tendency prevalent within Chinese historical writing to regard history as a decline from the moral excellence of such earlier times.⁸² Both of these factors are in turn probably related to the comparative absence of utopian thought in Chinese literature to which L.G. Thompson has drawn attention.⁸³ For if, as Sivin points out, "there was no reason to limit the world's extension into the future,"⁸⁴ the formulation of an ideal society as the end product of the development of human society was much less likely to arise than in the Judaic and Christian traditions with their strongly eschatological themes.

However, while it may be true that utopian thought appears to have constituted a relatively minor sideline within the Chinese

79. P. Demieville, "Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng and his historiography," in Ibid., pp. 167-185.

80. Sivin, Op. cit., p. 84.

81. Gray, "Historical Writing...", in Beasley and Pulleyblank (eds.), Op. cit., p. 186.

82. Pulleyblank, "Chinese historical..." in Ibid., p. 149.

83. Laurence G. Thompson, Ta T'ung Shu: The One-World Philosophy of K'ang Yu-wei (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1958), p. 55.

84. Sivin, Op. cit., p. 84.

historical tradition, it is of more than passing interest in the context of an analysis of Mao's thought, for such utopian elements do appear (especially during the Yan'an period) to have signally influenced his conception of historical time and the future.

Timoteus Pokora has argued that utopian thought probably did in fact constitute an important (though largely unrecorded) element of the ideologies inspiring peasant uprisings throughout China's history.⁸⁵ He also comments that the concepts *tai ping* (universal peace), *da tong* (great harmony), and *san shi* (the three ages), which have undoubtedly utopian connotations, have ancient heritage and can be traced back to the famous passage describing *da tong* in the Li Yun section of the Li Ji (Book of Rites).⁸⁶ This passage is relevant to our discussion of Mao's position on historical time and the future during the Yan'an period, and runs as follows:

When the Great Doctrine prevails, all under heaven will work for the common good. The virtuous will be elected to office, and the able given responsibility. Faithfulness will be in constant practice and harmony will rule. Consequently mankind will not only love their own parents and give care to their own children. All the aged will be provided for, and all the young employed in work. Infants will be fathered; widows and widowers, the fatherless and the unmarried, the disabled and the sick will all be cared for. The men will have their rights and the women their home. No goods will go to waste, nor need they be stocked for private possession. No energy should be retained in one's own body, nor used for personal gain. Self-interest ceases, and thieving and disorders are not known. Therefore the gates of the houses are never closed.

85. Timoteus Pokora, Review of L.G. Thompson, Op. cit., in Archiv Orientalni 29 (1961), p. 169.

86. Timoteus Pokora, "On the Origin of the Notions T'ai-p'ing and Ta-t'ung in Chinese Philosophy," Archiv Orientalni 29 (1961), p. 450.

This state is called the Great Commonwealth
(*da tong*).⁸⁷

Liang Qichao's interpretation of this passage suggests that the realization of such a society based on *da tong* was contingent less on the passage of time than on the manifestation and development to maximum degree of *ren* or "fellow-feeling" within each individual. A society of *da tong* was therefore imminently realizable given this condition.⁸⁸

However, other influential Chinese interpretations of this passage have generally connected the realization of such a society with a periodization of history in which the flow of time is characterized by several marked temporal boundaries, and in which a society of *da tong* constitutes the final stage or period in historical development. In such interpretations, history is perceived as divided into three major periods. In the Li Ji itself, history was portrayed as being constituted of three ages; the first a world of "disorder", the second a world of "small tranquility", and the third a world of "great unity". Such a tripartite periodization also emerges in adumbrated form in Dong Zhongshu's interpretation of Confucianism, and in the Gong Yang commentary on the Qun Qiu (Spring and Autumn Annals). However, it was a commentary by He Xiu (129-182 A.D.) on this Gong Yang commentary in which the concept of the "three ages"

87. This translation is taken from Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, History of Chinese Political Thought During the Early Tsin Period (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., 1930), p. 44. However, as L.G. Thompson points out (op. cit., p. 27), translations of this passage vary widely; he offers four alternate translations. A further translation can be found in Wm. Theodore de Bary (ed.), Sources of Chinese Tradition (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1960) I, p. 176.

88. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Op. cit., p. 44.

(*san shi*) is most clearly delineated, and the third age most explicitly equated with the notion of *tai ping* (universal peace).⁸⁹ In He Xiu's conception of historical time, these three ages are characterized by a movement of society from an age of "decay and disorder", through a period of "approaching peace", to an era of "universal peace".⁹⁰

The concept of the "three ages" in Chinese history was also later to emerge in the historical writing of Wang Fuzhi (1619-93), the Hunanese philosopher and historian with whose work Mao Zedong was familiar.⁹¹ In Wang's periodization, however, the utopian element is less clearly drawn than in He Xiu's commentary.⁹²

The division of history into three temporal periods was, by perceiving a progression and improvement in history as judged by the criterion of the degree of peace within society, in some contrast to the dominant conception of historical time within Chinese historical writing. Indeed, there can be no doubt that utopian thought did constitute a relatively minor sideline within the Chinese intellectual tradition. Gray has in fact described the "three ages" as this appeared in the *Li Ji* as representing "uninfluential and obscure speculation."⁹³ It is not until the modern era that a systematic utopian exposition of historical time was to appear in the form of Kang Youwei's *Da Tong Shu*, which sets out in surprising detail a society founded on the basis of

89. See Pokora, *Op. cit.*, p. 450; also Wakeman, *Op. cit.*, pp. 106-7.

90. Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: The Free Press, 1948), p. 201.

91. See PTMTT, p. 24n.

92. S.Y. Teng, "Wang Fu-chih's Views on History and Historical Writing," *Journal of Asian Studies* XXVIII:1 (November 1968), pp. 111-123, esp. p. 115.

93. Gray, "Historical Writing...", in Beasley and Pulleyblank (eds.), *Op. cit.*, p. 198.

da tong as this had been adumbrated in the Li Ji. Pokora has argued that, as well as being influenced by the Taiping millenarian doctrine of the mid-nineteenth century, Kang Youwei largely based his utopian exposition on the Gong Yang school which had incorporated the notion of the third age of history with the concept of "universal peace".⁹⁴ Kang's conception of a world premised on *da tong* also drew on Western evolutionary theories as well as on the more explicit eschatological impulses of Chinese Buddhist philosophy.⁹⁵

Kang's utopianism is of some relevance for our analysis of Mao's conception of historical time and the future, for there is evidence to suggest that Mao's views were influenced (particularly during the Yan'an period) by certain of the ideas contained in the Da Tong Shu.⁹⁶ As we shall see, both the concepts *da tong* (great harmony) and *san shi* (the three ages) emerge during the Yan'an period as important elements of Mao's position. We know that during Mao's formative years he had been an ardent admirer of Kang.⁹⁷ Moreover, the Da Tong Shu was generally available by the time Mao began formulating his ideas during the

94. Pokora, Op. cit., pp. 169, 450.

95. Gray, in Beasley and Pulleyblank (eds.), Op. cit., pp. 198, 202.

96. John Bryan Starr has argued that Mao manifested utopian inclinations during only "two relatively brief periods"; namely, his pre-Marxist period, and the period of the Great Leap Forward. As we shall see, however, the writings of the Yan'an period offer sufficient evidence to suggest a marked utopian element in Mao's thinking at that time. I use the term "utopian" advisedly here; to indicate a belief in a perfect society at some future point in time, rather than as is sometimes used, to indicate a divorce from reality. As our analysis unfolds, it will become evident that an extremely pragmatic approach was quite compatible with such "utopian" inclinations. See John Bryan Starr, "Maoism and Marxist Utopianism," Problems of Communism (July-August 1977), pp. 56-62.

97. See Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968, 1972), p. 161; see also Schram, Mao Tse-tung, Op. cit., pp. 25, 27; and Wakeman, Op. cit., p. 99.

early Yan'an period; the first two sections of the Da Tong Shu had been published in the magazine Buren zazhi (Compassion) in 1913, and the entire work was published in 1935.⁹⁸ The fact that intellectuals close to Mao, and especially Chen Boda, were referring to it in the mid-1930's increases the likelihood that Mao was himself familiar with it,⁹⁹ and he was subsequently to refer to it in his important speech of 1949 entitled On the People's Democratic Dictatorship.¹⁰⁰

In the Western intellectual tradition, the notion of historical time has frequently and from early times incorporated utopian or eschatological visions of the future. The prophets of the Old Testament can, in fact, be attributed with introducing the dimension of the future into human thought, and this was related to an eschatological belief which perceived the future as bringing a more radical participation by God in human affairs.¹⁰¹ In general, Western conceptions of historical time have tended to cluster around two basic viewpoints; that of time as moving in cycles, and that of a unilinear flow of time providing for unrepeatability of historic occurrences. The Pre-Christian Greek philosophers were by and large exponents of the former view, perceiving history as moving in a cyclical pattern in which society passed continually through a process of degeneration and regeneration. Polybius, for example, maintained that it was

98. Thompson, Op. cit., pp. 20, 26-7; see also Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 98.

99. See Chen Boda, "Lun xin Qimeng Yundong," (On the New Enlightenment) in Xia Zhengnong (ed.), Xian jieduan de Zhongguo sixiang yundong (The Chinese thought movement in the current stage) (Shanghai: Yiban shudian, July 1937), p. 67; also Chen Boda, "Zai lun xin Qimeng Yundong," (Once again on the New Enlightenment), in Ibid., p. 89.

100. SW IV, p. 414; XJ IV, p. 1360; Ji X, p. 195; "Kang Yu-wei wrote Ta Tung Shu, or the Book of Great Harmony, but he did not and could not find the way to achieve Great Harmony."

101. See Milan Machoveč, A Marxist Looks at Jesus (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976), pp. 59-64.

possible to perceive a cycle in the type of constitutions adopted and utilized in human society, and in the Croesus, Herodotus was to clearly assert the cyclical nature of the historical process:

If you have understood that you are a man and that you reign over men, be aware that human affairs follow a cycle, the circular movement of which doesn't allow the same people to remain always prosperous.¹⁰²

Another influential exponent of the cyclical theory of history was the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), who perceived society as progressing through a cycle of growth and decay. Vico perceived demonstration of his theory in the similarities of the phases through which Western civilization and the antecedent Greco-Roman civilization had passed. Interestingly, Vico's cyclical theory was to have a significant influence on the ideas of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who established a tripartite periodization of history on its basis. In contrast to Chinese conceptions of the three ages, Comte's "law of the three stages" took human intellectual development as the criterion for temporal demarcation.¹⁰³

It is also interesting that Comte's is not the only theory of historical time in the West which perceived history as comprised of three stages. In the twelfth century, the Christian mystic Joachim of Fiore (c. 1130-1201) perceived a time structure of three ages, those of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁴ Joachim's philosophy

102. For a contrasting interpretation of Greek views of historical time see Jacqueline de Romilly, The Rise and Fall of States According to Greek Authors (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977). The quote given here is from p. 11.

103. See Stanislaw Andreski (ed.), The Essential Comte (London: Croom Helm, 1974), esp. pp. 19-41.

104. See Karl Löwith, Meaning in History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), Chapter VIII.

of history was, however, predicated on the flow of time being unilinear, rather than cyclical. This unilinear conception of historical time, characteristic of much Western religious thought, had found its greatest protagonist in the person of St. Augustine. Augustine explicitly repudiated the cyclical conception of history held by the Greek philosophers, for the cyclical conception precluded any real novelty in historical occurrence; and yet, certain features of human history (such as the birth of Christ) were, by their very nature, unique and unrepeatable. Consequently, Augustine argued that time must flow in a unilinear fashion, developing in a straight line from the creation of man, through the fall from grace, to the final judgement at which would occur the ultimate consummation of God's purpose on earth.¹⁰⁵

Marx's position on historical time and the future bears some similarity to the Augustinean conception in that it is firmly rooted in the belief that there is a definite goal to man's passage through time. Marx's position cannot, however, be readily categorized as either unilinear or cyclical. Marx perceived the passage through historical time as a function of developments within society, a temporal progression in which society passed through certain historical periods each of which was characterized by different forms of the forces of production, as well as different patterns of social relations corresponding to those productive forces. Marx therefore conceived of a progress in history in which the development of society was differentiated into different periods on the basis of the degree of complexity of the instruments of labour and other related social factors.

105. See Paolucci (ed.), Op. cit., passim.

It is now widely accepted that a central feature of Marx's philosophy of history was the belief that society developed through different stages representing different modes of production. What is not widely accepted is that Marx insisted on a fixed order of stages through which society must progress. Eric Hobsbawm, for example, has argued that "the general theory of historical materialism requires only that there should be a succession of modes of production, though not necessarily any particular modes, and perhaps not in any particular predetermined order."¹⁰⁶ Likewise, a close reading of Marx's writings suggests that Marx did not perceive in history a fixed and undeviating series of stages through which all societies must progress. Marx's analysis of Russian society is a case in point. Marx made no assumption that Russia would necessarily follow the path trod by its European neighbours. To the contrary, his analysis indicated a dualism within the form of land ownership evident in the Russian village community (land held in common but farmed separately) which might permit a form of development in which the collective element might prevail over private forms of ownership; Russia might thus avoid a capitalist future. "Everything depends," Marx wrote in a letter to Vera Zasulich (1881), "on the historical environment in which it occurs."¹⁰⁷ Similarly, in a letter to the Russian journal Otechestvenniye Zapiski (1877), Marx was to take issue with a critic who perceived in his analysis of West European history a schema for historical development of universal applicability:

The chapter on primitive accumulation does not pretend to do more than trace the path by which, in Western Europe, the capitalist order of economy

106. See Hobsbawm's introduction to Karl Marx, Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1964), pp. 19-20.

107. Ibid., p. 145.

emerged from the womb of the feudal order of economy.

But that is too little for my critic. He feels he absolutely must metamorphose my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into a historico-philosophical theory of the general path every people is fated to tread, whatever the historical circumstances in which it finds itself, in order that it may ultimately arrive at the form of economy which ensures, together with the greatest expansion of the productive powers of social labour, the most complete development of man. But I beg his pardon. He is both honouring and shaming me too much...events strikingly analogous but taking place in different historical surroundings (have) led to totally different results. By studying each of these forms of evolution separately and then comparing them one can easily find the clue to this phenomenon, but one will never arrive there by using as one's master key a general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being superhistorical.¹⁰⁸

However, despite Marx's denial of authorship of such a "general historico-philosophical theory", it remains a fact that many subsequent Marxists perceived in Marxism just such a theory. The Bolsheviks under Lenin, for example, adopted a theoretical framework for historical development which incorporated a largely unilinear progression of all societies through five fixed stages. Lenin had come to the conclusion very early in his career that Russia was not, as some Mensheviks claimed, an Asiatic mode of production. Such an admission would have threatened the possibility that Russia might in the near future give rise to a socialist revolution, and would have given credence to the Menshevik counsel that patience and restraint were essential during the long period in which Russia's productive forces had to develop and mature. It would consequently seriously diminish the role for political activism so favoured by

108. Quoted in Shlomo Avineri, *Op. cit.*, pp. 151-2.

Lenin. Lenin therefore insisted that Russia had, during the latter half of the nineteenth century, transformed itself from a largely feudal society into a society in which the forms of production and social relationships were essentially capitalist.¹⁰⁹ Lenin thus insisted that Russian society, despite its specific characteristics, could be accommodated within the orthodox Marxist schema of historical development. Lenin's rather uncritical acceptance and espousal of this orthodox five stage schema is clearly indicated in a lecture he delivered at Sverdlov University in 1919:

The development of all human societies for thousands of years, in all countries without exception, reveals a general conformity to law, a regularity and consistency in this development; so that at first we had a society without classes--the original patriarchal, primitive society, in which there were no aristocrats; then we had a society based on slavery--a slaveowning society... This form was followed in history by another--feudalism....Further, with the development of trade, the appearance of the world market and the development of money circulation, a new class arose within feudal society--the capitalist class.¹¹⁰

The history of all societies therefore witnessed a progression through a fixed series of stages, the last of which would be socialist society. This orthodox view of historical development was to congeal into dogma with Stalin's assumption of power in the Soviet Union, and the five stage schema was to gain the ultimate imprimatur in his Dialectical and Historical Materialism, written in 1938:

In conformity with the change and development of the productive forces of society in the course of history, men's relations of production, their economic relations also changed and developed.

109. See Lenin, Collected Works III, esp. pp. 172, 181, 312, 381, 484, 435.

110. Collected Works XXIX, pp. 475-6. Emphases added.

Five main types of relations of production are known to history: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist.¹¹¹

This orthodox Marxist view of historical development was by and large the interpretation of Marxism inherited by Mao Zedong. By the early 1930's, the Chinese protagonists of the concept of the Asiatic mode of production had lost the battle to assert China as a specifically Asiatic form of society and not merely a weakly-distinguished variant of European feudalism.¹¹² Mao had not been one of these protagonists, and the view of historical development, time and periodization that he derived from Marxism tended to be the orthodox version. This does not mean, however, that Mao merely parroted this orthodoxy without adding some characteristically individual touches to it; nor does it signify that his views on historical time remained constant. We will be attempting to identify these personal touches and variations in the course of this study.

It will also become apparent that Mao did not adhere rigidly to the orthodox Marxist conception of the future. In this orthodox conception, man's temporal progression was accomplished through a dialectical social process in which antithetical movements arose against prevailing patterns of production and social relations, such movements leading to a transformation in the mode of production and its supersession by a more advanced form. This view of man and society as progressing through time in an ascending dialectical manner perceived in the future a final stage in this process in which the constitutive elements

111. Joseph Stalin, Problems of Leninism (Peking: FLP, 1976), p. 862. Emphasis in original.

112. See Marian Sawer, "The Politics of Historiography: Russian Socialism and the Question of the Asiatic Mode of Production 1906-1931," Critique (Winter-Spring 1978/1979), pp. 16-35, esp. p. 22.

generating dialectical progression would cease to operate. This negation of the dialectic would result from the disappearance of the antagonisms normally generated by class division and conflict; for this final stage in development would be the higher phase of communism, a society in which there were no class divisions and in which need (rather than work or ownership) would be the criterion for the distribution of society's resources.

Despite the confidence with which orthodox Marxism perceived the future, it appears that Marx himself was rather reticent about making sweeping futuristic claims. There are, scattered through Marx's writings, brief and often enigmatic references to the emergence and characteristics of such a future state of society.¹¹³ However, such references either separately or together do not constitute a fully worked out theory of the future.

In Lenin's hands, the predictive aspects of Marxism found no such reticence. In his The State and Revolution (1917), Lenin argued that the achievement of the higher phase of communism would be characterized by the "withering away" of the state; the state was the political instrument of class oppression and exploitation and only by its disappearance could true freedom be realized. Moreover, the "withering away" of the state was perceived by Lenin as not only inevitable, but as a central tenet of Marxism; "Marx deduced from the whole history of socialism and the political struggle that the state was bound to disappear...".¹¹⁴

113. See Capital I, pp. 619, 667, 739, 929, 990; also Early Writings, p. 348; also The German Ideology, pp. 54-5; also Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme," in The First International and After (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), pp. 346-7, 355.

114. V.I. Lenin, Selected Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975, 1976) II, p. 278. Emphasis added.

Yet Lenin's optimism concerning the inevitable "withering away" of the state appears justified only because of his employment of exposition based on the philosophical concept of logical necessity (although Lenin himself does not employ this term). Logical necessity (in contradistinction to causal necessity) makes a certain result or outcome necessary by virtue of the terms employed in the initial premise. Logical necessity does not insist that such terms are necessarily a true description of extant phenomena, and can be utilized to allow a process of metaphysical ratiocination to proceed from given premises to logically necessary conclusions. Causal necessity, on the other hand, insists that the elements which the premise describes can be demonstrated to actually cause (not merely in terms used, but in fact) a certain result or outcome.¹¹⁵ It is certain that Lenin believed himself to be employing the category of causal necessity in inferring a future condition of human society; but this was not the case. It can be easily demonstrated that Lenin was, in The State and Revolution, employing logical rather than causal necessity to indicate the "inevitable" withering away of the state. Lenin's reasoning runs as follows: In class society, the state is a manifestation of the antagonism between classes, and its sole purpose is to protect the interests of the ruling class; following a socialist revolution, a state based on the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary to oppress the previous oppressors, this being a transitional phase on the path to a classless society; with the arrival of this classless society

115. This line of analysis entails a necessary rejection of Wittgenstein's position; according to Wittgenstein, there is only one category of necessity--logical necessity. Wittgenstein rejected the concept of the "causal nexus"; belief in it was, he asserted, "superstition". See, however, Ilham Dilman's interpretation in Induction and Deduction: A Study in Wittgenstein (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), pp. 126-7.

(the higher phase of communism) there can be no state for there are no classes; the state, being a function of class antagonisms, must necessarily disappear as those antagonisms disappear. It can be seen that this tidy piece of reasoning proceeds to a logical conclusion by virtue of the terms employed in the initial premise; that is, that the state is a manifestation of the antagonism between classes. In fact, Lenin could not demonstrate that the withering away of the state was "inevitable" by means of causal necessity, for he was dealing with a future happening of which there had been no previous experience in human history, the Paris Commune notwithstanding.¹¹⁶ He was forced therefore, to employ logical necessity to arrive at such a conclusion.¹¹⁷

Despite this philosophical confusion involved in the derivation of its historical predictions, the importance of an "inevitable" historical future within the Marxist-Leninist tradition cannot be over-estimated, for it has provided its adherents with a theoretical basis for historical optimism. This predictive feature of Marxism has been regarded by its adherents as being founded firmly on a scientific reading of social structure and function, this allowing temporal extrapolation into the future. The "inevitable" historical goals so derived have functioned to provide direction and rationale to political actions designed to radically alter existing societies. The present and the future are thus inextricably linked, and to a certain

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116. For a useful compilation of Lenin's references to the Paris Commune, see V.I. Lenin, The Paris Commune (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1931).
117. Popper's critique of the predictive aspects of Marxism is too well-known to need mention here. See The Poverty of Historicism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960, second ed.); also The Open Society and Its Enemies (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, 1966) II, esp. Chapter 13.

extent the future functions to structure the political alternatives of the present. There can be no doubt that Mao Zedong perceived Marxism largely from this perspective, although there was, as we shall see, considerable variation over time in this perception of the portended nature of communist society and the path to its eventual attainment.

In the study which follows, therefore, Mao's views on historical time and the future will be extricated and subjected to analysis. This will involve looking at the way in which Mao perceived the "flow" of time in historical terms, and the forms of periodization he employed together with the criteria utilized to establish temporal boundaries. It will also involve an examination of Mao's conception of the way time flowed into the future, and what the future held in store for society and mankind, this being particularly important for an understanding of the way Mao responded to the political alternatives of the present. An attempt will also be made to relate the way in which Mao perceived causation operating within society to his views on historical time, this to determine whether in Mao's thought these two adjuncts of historical consciousness meshed together in a reasonably systematic manner.

III. Philosophy of Science: The Derivation of Laws of History

Any interpretation of history makes explicit or implicit assumptions concerning the manner in which investigation of historical phenomena should proceed. Such assumptions influence not only the subject chosen for investigation, but also the way in which data are established as historical "facts" and the manner in which these are ordered, collated and interpreted. These underlying and perhaps

unarticulated premises thus play an important role in the reading of history which results; for history appears in the final analysis to be no more than a function of the theory which interprets it, and that theory must commence from certain assumptions and incorporate certain procedures for investigation, be they of whatever scientific status.

In the Chinese tradition, history was accorded a central role in investigations into the functioning of the world and man's role in it, and it was regarded, as Needham has pointed out, as the "queen of sciences".¹¹⁸ We have already commented on the unwillingness of Chinese historical writing to formulate a broad causal synthesis, and it was generally satisfied with a chronological approach in which the moral status of historical actions was portrayed as largely responsible for subsequent events. This narrowed scope does not imply, however, an absence of assumptions regarding the means whereby history could be interpreted and historical generalizations formulated. The very fact that morality was perceived as a central criterion for the interpretation of history implies a largely deductive approach in which particular events found relevance and explanation through a preconceived interpretive perspective. This inclination to utilize a deductive approach is also evidenced in the manner in which the Chinese historians created explanatory frameworks for the interpretation of China's past. As Theodore de Bary has commented, "using a preconceived philosophical doctrine of historical evolution, the Chinese, with the best intentions and their customary love of order and system in all things, proceeded to rearrange and tailor their ancient legends and

118. Needham, Op. cit., p. 15.

records to fit into a neat pattern...".¹¹⁹ This tendency toward a deductive approach is also clearly exemplified in Xun Zi's injunction that "one starts with general categories, and moves to particular ones; one starts with unity and moves to plurality."¹²⁰

The Chinese disinclination to formulate a broad causal synthesis for the explanation of historical events appears to be closely related to the failure of the Chinese tradition to produce laws of nature. Needham has argued that this was a function of the fact that the Chinese did not possess any fully-developed notion of a divine creator of nature. As Needham points out:

The development of the concept of precisely formulated abstract laws, capable, because of the rationality of an Author of nature, of being deciphered and re-stated, did not...occur. The Chinese world-view depended upon a totally different line of thought. The harmonious cooperation of all beings arose, not from the orders of a superior authority external to themselves, but from the fact that they were all parts in a hierarchy of wholes forming a cosmic pattern, and what they obeyed were the internal dictates of their own natures.¹²¹

This failure of the Chinese tradition to produce laws of nature stands in marked contrast to the intellectual tradition of the West. We will subsequently have cause to comment on Mao's predilection for formulating laws for the explanation of various phenomena, and it would seem that this predilection must have derived from Mao's confidence in Marxism, an intellectual tradition which had shown no reticence in deriving and proclaiming laws of nature and society.

119. Theodore de Bary (ed.), Op. cit., I, p. 201.

120. Burton Watson (trans.), Hsun Tzu: Basic Writings (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 44.

121. Quoted in Derke Bodde, "Evidence for 'Laws of Nature' in Chinese Thought," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 20 (1957), pp. 709-10.

In the Marxist tradition, the application of scientific procedures to the study of history has been regarded as being as necessary as the scientific study of the natural world. With the application of such scientific procedures, history has been deemed (at least to a certain extent) reducible to meaningful laws capable of guiding future interpretation, and allowing predictions regarding the future state of society. The formulation of historical laws has thus been regarded as an important and valid feature of social and historical inquiry. Marx himself claimed to have discovered the laws of motion of the capitalist mode of production, and he confidently asserted those laws to be of the same status as the laws of nature unearthed by natural scientists.¹²²

The formulation of historical laws necessitated, Marx suggested, two related processes. In the first of these, the observer had to isolate what constituted the essential "facts" for analysis. It was not immediately evident what those facts might be, and the observer's task was to sift through the data attempting to apprehend that feature of social life which was central to the construction and operation of a particular society. In the Introduction to the Grundrisse, Marx was to argue that the political economists of the past had mistakenly taken the most obvious feature of social life (such as the population or the nation-state) as the proper object and starting-point for analysis. This was, however, a mistaken method of proceeding, for the observer had to move beyond such obvious global categories to grasp the basic and determinant unit of the society. As Marx was to point out:

In all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations thus assign rank and influence to

122. See especially Capital I, pp. 90-2.

the others. It is a general illumination which bathes all the other colours and modifies their particularity. It is a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being which has materialized within it.¹²³

For Marx, the basic unit or "fact" of the capitalist mode of production was the commodity; all features of capitalist society could be laid bare through an analysis of the commodity--the way in which it was produced, the sort of social relationships which developed around its production, and the type of political and ideological arrangements which emerged to defend those relationships. By correctly grasping this predominant unit for analysis, the inner mechanics of capitalist society could thus be revealed.

In the determination of what constituted the basic "fact" for analysis, the observer was obliged to pursue a largely inductionist procedure. This involved the rejection of anterior and preconceived views or hypotheses which might have the effect of prejudicing an objective search for the basic unit or "fact" of social life. Once this had been grasped, the observer could move forward, tracing connections and relationships governed by that basic unit or "fact". In this first stage of the process of law derivation, there is a strong emphasis on empirical analysis, seeking through an exhaustive investigation of the facts of social life to arrive at a point at which a summation of trends and tendencies becomes possible. Once again, no presumption of results is warranted prior to such empirical investigation. Marx was in fact to explain his omission of an introduction to his Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy of 1859 by reference to the need to avoid a premature and *a priori*

123. Grundrisse, pp. 106-7.

reconstruction ahead of the analysis itself; "...on further consideration it seems to me confusing to anticipate results which still have to be substantiated, and the reader who really wishes to follow me will have to decide to advance from the particular to the general."¹²⁴

However, once the exhaustive empirical investigation had been carried out, the observer could then validly proceed to a formulation of laws, trends and generalizations which had emerged from the study. The formulation of such laws, and the reconstruction of the findings of social and historical analysis thus came as the latter part of a chain of investigation. In presenting a reconstruction of the findings of a social analysis, it might appear (as it does in Volume I of Marx's Capital) as though the correct order of procedure had been reversed. This was, however, justified as long as a clear distinction had been made between the mode of inquiry and the method of presentation itself. Marx explained this distinction as follows:

Of course the method of presentation must differ in form from that of inquiry. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyze its different forms of development and to track down their inner connection. Only after this work has been done can the real movement be appropriately presented. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is now reflected back in the ideas, then it may appear as if we have before us an *a priori* construction.¹²⁵

The laws which result from historical and social analysis are therefore largely inductively derived, and there is a strong emphasis on working from the particular to the general in terms of analytical sequence.

124. Early Writings, p. 424.

125. Capital I, p. 102. Emphasis added.

In classical inductionism (as practised by Newton), there is the presumption that laws are based on the unprejudiced observation of numerous particular instances within a category. Because it is not, in most cases, possible to observe all such particular instances, the formulation of a law can be regarded as valid provided a large and representative sample of instances has been observed. This law is then assumed to be a binding description of all instances within the category, whether observed or unobserved. There is therefore an extrapolative leap in the logic of inductionism which permits the law to be valid for the category as a whole.

As we have seen, Marx's position for the most part approximated the inductionist paradigm. However, he deviated from it in one important detail; Marx was well aware that it is not self-evident what the "facts" of social life are. The first important stage of analysis was therefore to isolate those "facts". Once this process had been accomplished, the observer could move forward to an observation of such "facts" and an analysis of their role in the structure and function of society. The observation of society (after the selection of the basic "fact", such as the commodity in capitalist society) was not and could not be completely unprejudiced, for the observer had already determined a framework for analysis through a determination of that which was to be observed. Marx was therefore well aware that a purely empiricist perspective was not possible, and he indicated that the observer had to apply a process of abstraction whereby the diversity of the concrete external world was provided unity and conceptual order to become the "concrete in thought". The role of the observer was consequently central to the process of scientific investigation, for only through mental abstraction and conceptualization could chaos be

reduced to order, and diversity organized into system.¹²⁶

Marx's position was therefore rather more sophisticated than that of the crude empiricist or an extreme inductionist, for he was well aware of the methodological difficulties facing both, and the type of methodological improprieties into which a naive empiricist might stray. Nevertheless, Marx's deference to an inductive approach for a large part of the process of scientific analysis and the derivation of laws has been emphasized within the orthodox Marxist tradition, and it has come for many Marxists to represent the only valid scientific method for the study of society and history.

Mao Zedong, like many other Marxists, reflected the respect which history *qua* science has been accorded within the orthodox Marxist tradition. "Respect for history," Mao commented in On New Democracy (1940), "means giving it its proper place as a science."¹²⁷ Moreover, Mao was, as we shall see, to insist doggedly on inductionism as the only valid scientific method. The important questions which arise as a consequence are: How was Mao able to combine such an insistence on inductionism with an insistence on the adoption of an over-arching theory such as Marxism? Would not the adoption of Marxism as a theory of society and history fatally prejudice any attempt to implement and employ an inductionist investigation into the nature of Chinese society and history?

The rather idiosyncratic means by which Mao resolved these problems was to constitute an important determinant in the way in which he approached the problem of utilizing a universal theory of history such

126. Grundrisse, pp. 100-1.

127. SW II, p. 381.

as Marxism in a particular and specific historical context.

IV. "Sinification of Marxism": The Union of Universal and Particular

We have observed (in Section II above) that Marx disclaimed authorship of a "general historico-philosophical theory"; his interpretation of history and society had to be regarded, he asserted, as more modest and more specific than the claims made for it by others. Despite these disclaimers, however, Marx was to provide bountiful ammunition for those who sought a universal theory in his analysis of capitalist society and its emergence from the decay of the feudal order in Western Europe.¹²⁸ Indeed, it was not to take long before certain generalizations arising from Marx's analysis had been transformed by his followers into a body of virtually immutable laws which were assumed to govern the development of all societies, whatever the particularities and unique characteristics of those societies. Marxism thus became a universal theory, and by the time of the rise of Stalin to power in the Soviet Union, Marxism had degenerated from being an open-ended and potentially fruitful series of hypotheses about the nature of society and history, to a closed system which largely excluded the unique properties of different societies, thus precluding the possibility of any fundamental refutation.

Moreover, this interpretation of Marxism was to become the orthodoxy of the Third International, and as such came to wield a significant influence on the form of Marxism adopted by aspiring revolutionaries in the colonial context. Marxism was, they were told, a universal theory; what they were not told was how such a universal theory, with all of its Europocentric trappings and assumptions, could

128. See especially Capital I, pp. 90-1.

be utilized and applied in social contexts very different from those analyzed by Marx himself. Were they to proceed to an interpretation of their own societies by uncritical reference to this universal theory?; or were they to adapt and transform Comintern Marxism, and risk excommunication as a result?

By the late 1930's, the international and domestic Chinese situations were such that Mao could attempt the adaptation of Marxism to Chinese conditions without risking the loss of Moscow's imprimatur. However, Mao did not at that time, and was never subsequently, to deny that Marxism was a universal theory. This insistence on the universality of Marxism while simultaneously insisting on the need to adapt Marxism to Chinese conditions necessitated some rather convoluted logic in order that both these aims could be achieved. The centrality of Marxism to Mao's perception of history and society necessitates that we undertake the task of unravelling that logic, and attempt to reconstruct the way in which Mao was able to harmonize these two seemingly contradictory aims.

This reconstruction of Mao's logic is also important, for Mao's Marxism has in the main been received rather coolly by European Marxists.¹²⁹ Mao's thought has frequently been regarded as something of an exotic off-shoot of mainstream (that is, Western European) Marxism, something to be noted in passing, but not to be accorded the accolades reserved for a Gramsci, Lukács, or Althusser. This "benign neglect" has resulted in large part from a misinterpretation of Mao's insistence on the need to adapt Marxism to adequately meet the needs of the struggle

129. One must make an exception here for Louis Althusser, who has taken Mao's contributions to Marxist dialectics quite seriously; see his For Marx (London: NLB, 1977), pp. 94n., 101n., 210-11.

at the national level. By calling for the "Sinification of Marxism" in the late thirties, Mao was not, as we shall observe, coining a slogan which asserted some sort of cultural (Chinese) prerogative over Marxism. Nevertheless, this formula was flung in Mao's teeth with the onset of the Sino-Soviet dispute precisely because it was perceived as just such a claim to a cultural prerogative over Marxism. Maurice Thorez's rejoinder to the Chinese at the 1960 Moscow conference is a good example of this type of (mis)perception of Mao's Marxism, and goes a long way toward explaining the disenchantment of much of the Left in the developed nations with the theoretical utility of that Marxism:

The Declaration of 1957 reminds us that...
 "Lenin insisted many times on the necessity of correctly applying the fundamental principles of communism in accordance with the specific traits of each nation, of each national state." This thesis, which is profoundly correct, has nothing to do with the curious theories defended by our Chinese comrades about the "Chinification" of Marxism-Leninism...What would remain of the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism after its "Chinification" by some, its "Frenchification" by others, or its "Russification"...?130

It is hoped that the interpretation of Mao's "Sinification of Marxism" which has been included in this study will go some distance toward setting the record straight. For Mao did not, as Thorez suggested, deny the universal principles of Marxism, and his attempts to provide Marxism with a national form without detracting from its universal status deserves serious theoretical consideration and analysis.

130. M & A, p. 309. Emphasis in original.

CHAPTER TWO

The Yan'an Period: 1936-45

For purposes of this study, the Yan'an period is defined as running from 1936 to mid-1945. With the arrival of the Communist forces in the North West of China following the Long March of 1935, a new chapter had opened in the history of the Chinese Communist movement generally, and Mao's own political and intellectual career in particular. During the Jiangxi Soviet, Mao's political influence had declined considerably as the power of the Returned Students' Faction had waxed. However, with the fifth encirclement campaign and the rout which followed, Mao's hand was strengthened in his struggle with this faction. At Zunyi in January 1935, Mao managed to translate that reversal of influence into organizational and policy terms, by gaining election to the position of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council and Chairman of the Politburo (or perhaps Politburo Standing Committee).¹

While the Zunyi Conference can be regarded as initiating a dramatic shift in his personal fortunes, the consolidation of Mao's power base within the Chinese Communist Party involved a process which

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1. See Jerome Ch'en, "Resolutions of the Tsunyi Conference," China Quarterly 40 (October) 1969, pp. 1-38; also Dieter Heinzig, "Otto Braun and the Tsunyi Conference," China Quarterly 42 (April) 1970, pp. 131-135; also Dick Wilson, The Long March (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), pp. 91-109. See also Zhang Guotao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party 1928-1938 (Wichita: University Press of Kansas, 1972) Vol. II. From Zhang's rather hazy recollections it emerges that Mao was elected "as an additional member of the Politburo of the Central Committee" (p. 364), to a "responsible post" (p. 380), and to be "a member of the CC Politburo, while retaining his post as Chairman of the Central Government and of the CC Military Affairs Committee" (p. 378). Warren Kuo argues that Mao took over chairmanship of the Party's Military Council, and also was elected as member of the Politburo and its Standing Committee; see Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1970) III, pp. 23-4.

spanned the entire Yan'an period and which was only finally consummated by the recognition of his virtual dominance of the Party at the Seventh Party Congress of May 1945. This process of consolidation was closely linked to the military, political and ideological policy initiatives undertaken by Mao, many of which were in direct contrast to the ideas and policies previously pursued and still advocated by members of the Returned Students' Faction. The campaign waged by Mao and his adherents to gain Party-wide acceptance of these policy initiatives culminated in the *Zhengfeng* movement of 1942-44, which sought to propagate those initiatives at all levels within the Party. In terms of power and influence, then, the Yan'an years stand out as a period in Mao's career, for they represent the historical incubator within which his ambitions came to fruition.

In terms also of intellectual development, there is no doubt that the years of the Yan'an period were highly significant. During the early years of this period, Mao set out in earnest to gain some mastery over Marxist theory, and to establish his distinct interpretation of Marxism as a credible contender for the role of the Party's ideological orthodoxy. These years of "ideological creativity", as Wylie has termed them,² provided Mao's inquiring intellect with a firm theoretical foundation and the confidence to break new ground in the search for a theory in tune with the specific requirements of the Chinese Revolution. Consequently, the writings of the Yan'an period demonstrate a growing sophistication and internal symmetry. As Stuart Schram points out in his biography of Mao:

The Yenan period, especially the two years from the beginning of 1938 to the beginning of 1940, is an altogether exceptional one in Mao's

2. Wylie, Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta, and the Conscious Creation...
Op. cit., p. 14.

literary career. Not only was his total output very high, but it consisted more of relatively long and systematic writings and less of reports, speeches, and directives than at any other time in his life...he was at last achieving the grasp of Marxist theory, the self-confidence, and the breadth of vision necessary to deal globally with the problems of the Chinese revolution.³

While Mao's intellectual development obviously did not come to an end in May 1945, the Seventh Party Congress of that date constitutes an important watershed in his career and the Party's history. For at that Congress, the "Thought of Mao Zedong" was adopted as the "Party's only correct guiding theory and its only correct general line."⁴ The Seventh Congress (rather than the military loss of Yan'an in 1947) thus appears as the more credible culmination of the Yan'an period in terms of Mao's own intellectual and political career.

In historical terms, the Yan'an years can also be perceived as constituting a recognizable period. The Japanese invasion of China, and the consequent policies of armed guerilla struggle and the establishment of base areas pursued by the Chinese Communists during the ensuing Anti-Japanese War were to persist for this entire period, and constituted its major characterizing historical features. While the policy of the Second United Front (as "bloc without") may have been pursued with varying levels of commitment, there is no doubt that it did constitute at least initially a major determinant of Party policy. It was, however, progressively honoured more in the breach than in the observance (and especially so following the New Fourth Army Incident of early 1941), and with the impending cessation

3. Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung, Op. cit., p. 211.

4. See M & A, p. 260.

of the Anti-Japanese War in 1945, the putative cooperation between the Communists and the Nationalist Government was deprived of any basis for its continued existence. The military struggles of the Anti-Japanese War, and the policies dictated by the Second United Front would thus appear to provide a reasonably consistent historical backdrop against which to assess Mao's views on historical causation and time during this key period in his intellectual development. As we shall see, his views on these problems were strongly influenced by the nature of this political and historical backdrop; the extent of this influence in fact reinforcing the assumption that Mao's ideas cannot safely be analyzed in the absence of a periodization which temporally anchors those ideas firmly to the historical environment within which those ideas were to find generation and formulation.

I. Causation in History

As we have observed, in Marx's theory of history the thrust of analysis was directed towards an investigation of the material "basis" of society--a causally interconnected combination of the forces of production and their corresponding relations of production--and the way in which this material "basis" gave rise to and influenced non-material or superstructural elements of society such as the state, religion and juridical system. It was argued that Marx's position had to be interpreted in such a way as to allow a wide definition to the causally generative area of society, this to prevent too narrow a construction being placed on Marx's conception of economics; it was also argued that Marx himself had been concerned to utilize this approach in a flexible manner which would permit the disclosure of the "specific character" of different historical contexts.

However, the orthodoxy which prevailed within the international communist movement at the time Mao Zedong turned his attention to a serious study of Marxism during the early Yan'an period, was not such a broadly conceived or flexibly-applied interpretation of this theory of history. By 1936, Stalin's preeminent position within both the Soviet Union and the Comintern dictated that the orthodox Marxism to be adopted and utilized by the international communist movement would be that laid down by Stalin himself.

Stalin perceived in Marxism two related theories; one philosophical, the other historical. The former, dialectical materialism, was asserted to be a universally applicable philosophy capable of explaining the ontological nature and the behaviour of all phenomena.⁵ While the theoretical elements of dialectical materialism need not detain us here, it is important to note that Stalin appears to have derived this philosophy not so much from Marx, but from Engels via the writing of Plekhanov and Lenin.⁶ Marx had in fact written comparatively little on philosophy as such, consciously giving it up in the 1840's for the study of political economy.⁷ Engels' views on philosophy and natural science were far more rigid and mechanistic than those of Marx himself, and he was to enshrine these views in several major treatises which purported to establish a philosophy based on a materialist interpretation of matter and nature.⁸ In constructing an official philosophy for Soviet and Comintern Marxism, Stalin was to

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5. J.V. Stalin, "Dialectical and Historical Materialism," in Problems of Leninism, Op. cit., pp. 835-873.
 6. See Lucio Colletti's "Introduction" to Karl Marx, Early Writings, pp. 14-16.
 7. The term "dialectical materialism" was in fact first coined by Plekhanov; see Bottomore and Rubel (eds.), Op. cit., p. 36.
 8. See especially Frederick Engels, Anti-Duhring (Peking: FLP, 1976); also Dialectics of Nature (Moscow: FLPH, 1954).

borrow heavily from these philosophical writings by Engels,⁹ and this was to contribute considerably to the rigidity and lack of flexibility in the form of Marxism which resulted.

According to Stalin, the second of the theories which constituted Marxism was historical materialism, and this was the application of dialectical materialism to the study of society and its development; in other words, the application of dialectical materialism to the study of history. Historical materialism commenced from the basic Marxist assumption that human activities associated with production were the locus from which originated all other forms of human activity. The nature of any society was conditioned by the mode of production of material life which existed in that society; the mode of production was constituted of the productive forces and the class relations of production which were produced by and which in turn influenced the productive forces. It is important to note that Stalin regarded the instruments of production as the most important aspect of the productive forces, and that which gave rise "in the first place" to changes and development in the productive forces; moreover, the productive forces represented the "most mobile and revolutionary element" of society. Thus, while the forces of production were not immune from subsequent influence from the relations of production, it was these productive forces which constituted the decisive locus for historical causation; and within the forces of production it was the instruments of production which were principal.¹⁰

This emphasis on the productive forces and the instruments of

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- 9. This is obvious from the sources utilized by Stalin in "Dialectical and Historical Materialism"; see also Colletti, Op. cit., p. 14.
 - 10. Stalin, Problems of Leninism, pp. 856-60.

production has come to be identified as a central characterizing feature of Stalinist Marxism. This does not mean, however, that Stalin allowed no historical role to other areas of society. We have commented on Stalin's assertion that the relations of production could exert an influence on the forces of production. Likewise, Stalin was to suggest that superstructural elements did perform an important historical function; "As regards the significance of social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, as regards their role in history, historical materialism, far from denying them, stresses the important role and significance of these factors in the life of society, in its history."¹¹

Yet, this attribution of a degree of historical effectivity to the superstructure did not prevent Soviet Marxism generally from developing into a rigidly reductionist doctrine which applied an unsophisticated and mechanistic class interpretation to such superstructural elements as the state and culture. While there can be no doubt that Marx perceived culture (art, literature, attitudes) as strongly influenced by class factors, Stalinist Marxism went further to assert a rigid correlation between class and culture, and imputed an unrelenting homogeneity to the culture of a particular class. There was, therefore, a "working class culture" which could be defined with precision, and which permitted of no variations or subtle differentiation; for the working class was represented as a homogeneous social category, and the culture it produced was necessarily as uniform.

This strong reductionist tendency in Stalinist Marxism is indicative of a general lack of appreciation of the variability and

11. Ibid., p. 851. Emphasis in original.

difference which appears to characterize social reality. Society might well be complex and its development difficult to fathom, but by utilizing a rigid and all-embracing formula, a ready explanation of any historical context could always be produced. Marxism, in Stalin's hands, thus came to represent something of a closed system which could, because of the assumptions upon which it was premised, always produce the "right" answer; in other words, the answer which was expected could always be arrived at through an unimaginative application of a class analysis. This lack of sensitivity to the possible variability characterizing different societies and their development is also clearly evidenced by Stalin's canonization of the theory of a unilinear progression by all societies through five fixed stages. No matter what its specific and particular qualities, a society had necessarily to follow the historical path which had been trod by the societies of Western Europe.¹² There appeared to be no dispensation from this pattern of development; the many pre-capitalist societies of the East were regarded as feudal or weakly-distinguished variants of European feudalism, rather than as societies characterized by a distinctively Asiatic mode of production.¹³

It is important to emphasize these distinctive features of Soviet Marxism under Stalin, for much of Mao's appreciation of political economy and historical interpretation derived from Soviet sources which became available during the Yan'an period.¹⁴ Although Mao attested

12. Ibid., pp. 653-4, 862.

13. See Stalin's reference to China as a "semi-feudal system"; Ibid., p. 855.

14. Schram, Mao Tse-tung, Op. cit., p. 222; also T.A. Bisson, Yenan in June 1937: Talks with Communist Leaders (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 37; Wylie has argued that the concept of the "Sinification of Marxism" had its "theoretical roots" in Mao's Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism, a piece heavily dependent on Soviet sources; see Wylie, Op. cit., pp. 82-4.

in 1943 to the fact that the Comintern had not interfered in the internal affairs of the Chinese Communist Party since the Seventh Comintern Congress in 1935,¹⁵ Soviet ideological influence (as opposed to direct political compulsion) remained strong. Being widely regarded as orthodoxy, Soviet Marxism represented the theoretical framework within which Mao's individual approach to Marxism had to emerge, and whose constraints he was forced to loosen in order to permit his insistence on the unique and specific characteristics of the Chinese society and revolution.

A reading of the Yan'an texts indicates however that Mao was only partially successful in liberating himself from this Stalinist orthodoxy, and his attempts to establish an individual approach to the problem of social and historical interpretation could not be represented with any accuracy as a complete tergiversation. At much the same time as Mao was calling for a Sinified Marxism closely adapted to Chinese conditions, many of his other utterances on social and historical problems were to reflect the influence of Soviet Marxism. Nevertheless, Mao's "Sinification" speech of October 1938 must be regarded as something of a watershed, as subsequent pronouncements do begin to indicate a waxing confidence in his status as a Marxist theoretician capable of formulating a theoretical approach conducive to an interpretation of Chinese history and society which could lead to a successful revolutionary strategy.

Mao's writings of the early Yan'an period (that is, prior to

15. Ji IX, p. 18. The veracity of Mao's claim is reinforced by Charles B. McLane who asserts that the imposition of the Returned Students' Faction on the CCP in late 1930 was the "last identifiable instance of outright Soviet intervention in the internal affairs of the Chinese Communist Party." See Soviet Policy and the Chinese Communists, 1931-1946 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 9.

the "Sinification" speech) indicate that his theoretical position on historical causation lacked consistency, and that he was still occasionally prone to the invocation of an unsophisticated form of reductionist explanation characteristic of Soviet Marxism. This lack of consistency emerges clearly if we turn to an examination of two important documents of this early period. In the first of these, a most interesting and underutilized document subtitled On One-Party Dictatorship (February 1938), Mao attempted to apply what can only be described as a crude reductionist methodology to explain the differing reasons why the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy had political systems within which only a single political party operated.¹⁶ The Soviet Union, we are informed, possessed such a one-party system precisely because there existed no "social base" (*shehui jichu*) for any party other than the Communist Party. There was consequently neither the possibility nor the necessity for the existence of other political parties. Legal proscription was not necessary; the Russian people (because of the transformation of the economy into a socialist type) no longer supported other parties, and they had therefore been discarded.¹⁷ On this point at least, Mao was to remain consistent throughout the Yan'an period; in On Coalition Government (1945), Mao reiterated that the "Russian system has been shaped by Russian history...the people support the Bolshevik Party alone, having discarded all the anti-socialist parties."¹⁸ In both instances, Mao seemed prepared to accept that the "social base" dictated both the existence and nature of resultant political institutions.

Mao's ability to theoretically justify the existence of only a

16. Ji V, pp. 305-21.

17. Ibid; especially pp. 307-310.

18. SW III, p. 235; XJ III, p. 963; Ji IX, p. 226.

single political party in the Soviet Union where there still existed more than one economic class had been made possible by several pronouncements by Stalin in his "Report on the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R." of November 1936 (from which Mao quotes with approval). Firstly, Stalin insisted that economic and political class divisions and contradictions were becoming "obliterated" in the Soviet Union.¹⁹ Secondly, the relationship which existed between the classes was no longer antagonistic, and was indeed "friendly". It is worth quoting Stalin here, for it is clear that Mao leaned heavily on Stalin's position in order to arrive at his own:

A party is a part of a class, its most advanced part. Several parties, and, consequently, freedom for parties, can exist only in a society in which there are antagonistic classes whose interests are mutually hostile and irreconcilable--in which there are, say, capitalists and workers, landlords and peasants, kulaks and poor peasants, etc. But in the U.S.S.R. there are no longer such classes as the capitalists, the landlords, the kulaks, etc. In the U.S.S.R. there are only two classes, workers and peasants, whose interests--far from being mutually hostile--are, on the contrary, friendly. Hence, there is no ground in the U.S.S.R. for the existence of several parties, and, consequently, for freedom for these parties. In the U.S.S.R. there is ground for only one party, the Communist Party.²⁰

There was thus, according to Stalin, a growing social consensus and cohesion founded on the establishment of a socialist economy, and this gave rise to a situation in which only one party was possible or necessary. It is interesting to note that Mao's explanation was made somewhat easier by the fact that Stalin's reference to the "two classes" had been translated into Chinese as "two strata" (*jieceng*); perhaps in Mao's mind this reinforced the possibility that the

19. Stalin, Problems of Leninism, Op. cit., p. 803.

20. Ibid., p. 819; cf. Ji V, p. 308. Emphasis added.

"obliteration" of the classes in the Soviet Union had proceeded to the extent that they could now be referred to only as "strata".²¹ It must be remembered, however, that Mao had been exposed, during the period of the First United Front (1924-27), to the Comintern's singular definition of the Guomindang as a "bloc of four classes", and it is probable that because of this he was less inclined to insist theoretically that a party was a political manifestation of only one economic class. The possibilities of political representation across class lines by a single party had thus already been indicated historically.²²

It would appear then that Mao was prepared to rather uncritically accept and disseminate a Stalinist explanation for the existence of a one-party system in the Soviet Union. His explanation of the existence of the one-party system in the Soviet Union was predicated on the assumption that a uniformly socialist economy is capable of producing only one political party; developments within the political arena were thus correlative with, and dependent upon, developments within the "social base" of society. Unfortunately, Mao does not, in this document, provide any definition for this "social base", although he obviously regards it as the locus from which social causation flows. It would seem clear, however, that Mao included in this "social base" the class structure of society, along with the form of economic ownership; it is also obvious that Mao clearly excluded political organizations and institutions such as the party from this causally generative area.²³

21. Problems of Leninism, p. 819; cf. Ji V, p. 308.

22. MZDOC, p. 23; BZF I, p. 83; SW I, p. 326; XJ I, p. 290.

23. See also SW II, p. 309; XJ II, p. 587; Ji VII, p. 101; also Ji VII, p. 105; also SW II, p. 318; XJ II, p. 600; Ji VII, p. 116; also Ji V, pp. 307, 309, 316; also Ji V, p. 179.

When Mao turned his attention to Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy, the reasons adduced for the existence of their supposedly one-party systems were rather different. In both of these societies, the economic system and class divisions had given rise to several competing parties; in both instances, however, the fascists had attempted to create politically a one-party system. By using legal proscription, the *de jure* status of the other parties had been removed, but their *de facto* existence (which derived from economic factors) continued; and this could be demonstrated by reference to anti-fascist activities pursued by such parties both domestically and abroad. Thus, although one-party dictatorships might have existed in Germany and Italy, they were not, according to Mao, true one-party systems for other parties continued to exist.²⁴

It would appear, nevertheless, that in attributing to a political institution such as the state the power to legally proscribe competing parties and to create legally (if not in fact) a one-party system, Mao was not underestimating the ability of the political institution of the dominant class to act forcefully to protect the interests of that class. There is no suggestion, however, that such political institutions are capable of having any marked impact on the "social base" of society; in fact, the opposite is implied, and the "social base" is portrayed as the area of society to be invoked in terms of causal explanation. The position on causation which emerges from this document is represented diagrammatically in Figure 1.

This somewhat clumsy attempt by Mao to justify the existence of a one-party system in the Soviet Union by the application of a rather mechanical form of reductionism gives the impression that his

24. Ji V, pp. 309-10.

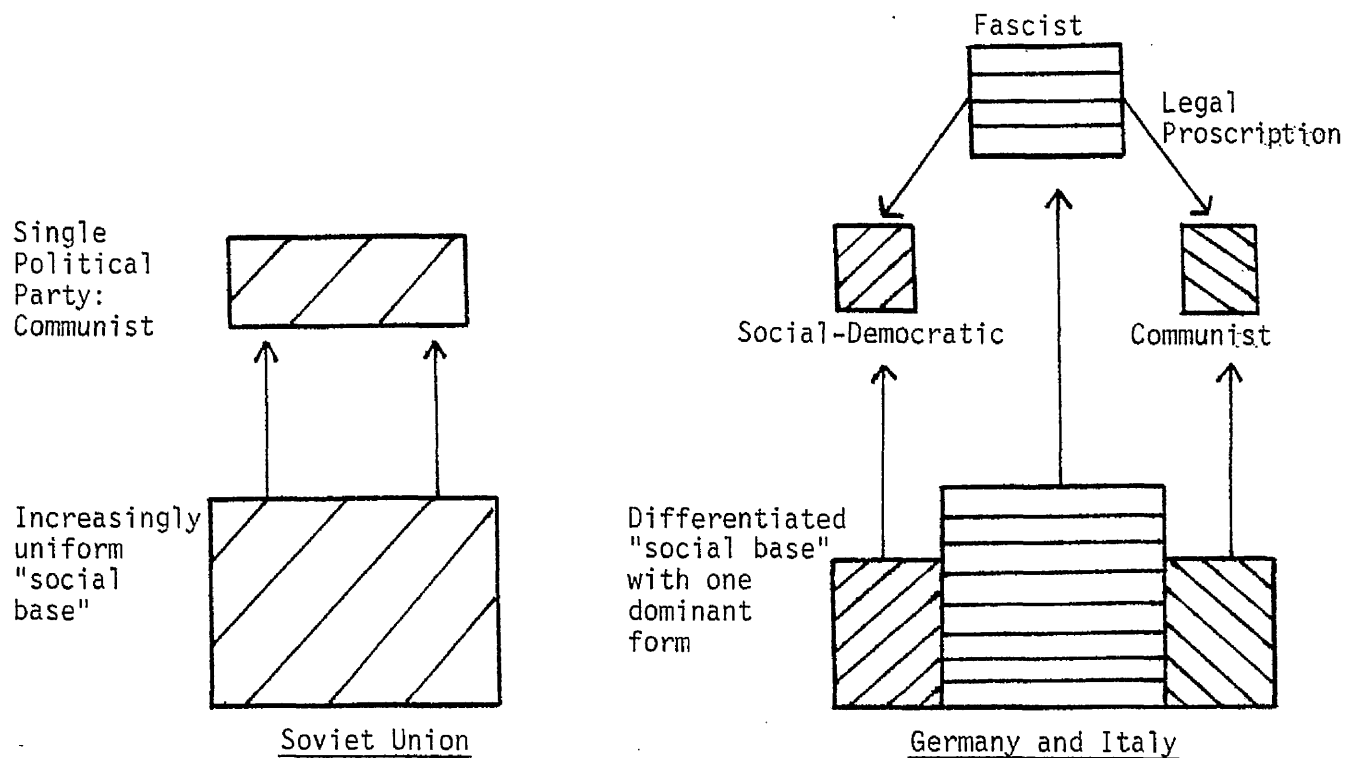


FIGURE 1: On One-Party Dictatorship.

views on social and historical causation were still as yet unsophisticated and largely derivative. However, this impression is weakened if we turn to an examination of a second and very important document putatively from this early Yan'an period, On Contradiction. Reference was made in the Introduction to the controversy over the dating of this essay. The Chinese, and Mao himself, consistently claimed that this document was originally written in August 1937.²⁵ With the discovery of a pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction, it appears that this claim may be authentic and the demurrals of some Western analysts unjustified.²⁶ As I have set out elsewhere in considerable

25. SW I, p. 311; XJ I, p. 274; see also Edgar Snow, The Long Revolution (London: Hutchinson, 1971, 1972), p. 206.

26. See especially Arthur A. Cohen, The Communism of Mao Tse-tung (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 22-28; also Dennis Doolan and Peter Golas, "On Contradiction in the Light of Mao Tse-tung's Essay on Dialectical Materialism," The China Quarterly, No. 19 (July-September 1964), pp. 38-64.

detail my reasons for accepting this essay as a composition of the Yan'an period, let us turn without further delay to an analysis of the references to social and historical causation to be found in this pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction.²⁷

While the text of this pre-Liberation version of On Contradiction is significantly different from the later revised version, two important passages dealing with this problem of causation in society appear largely the same in both documents. In these passages, Mao employs orthodox Marxist categories in a manner which suggests that he was taking some tentative steps towards a theoretical position which would permit a somewhat greater degree of flexibility in interpreting the causal effectivity of the various elements of society. The passages here reproduced at length are from the pre-Liberation document; the sections in italics have been excised from the official post-Liberation text:

I regard all principal and non-principal positions of the aspects of a contradiction as involved in this mutual change.

Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal (*zhudao*) aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there is no change in their respective positions. *It should be realized that under normal conditions, and viewed from a materialist point of view, they really are unchanging and absolute things; however, there are historically many particular situations in which they do change.* The productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that sometimes such aspects as the relations

27. Knight, Op. cit., pp. 641-668; also MZDOC, pp. 3-7.

of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role...When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. Are we going against materialism when we say this? No. The reason is that we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental. We also--and indeed must--recognize the reaction of mental on material things. This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism.²⁸

Elsewhere in this document, Mao again refers to the problem of causation:

When Marx and Engels applied the law of *the unity of contradictions* to the study of the socio-historical process, they discovered *the basic causes of social development to be* the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, *the contradiction of class struggle*, and the resultant (*you zhewie maodun suo chanshengde*) contradiction between the economic base and its superstructure (politics, ideology).²⁹

On the basis of these references, the following observations can be made. Firstly, Mao identifies several elements of society as having a potential for causal effectivity. These are the forces of production, the relations of production, class struggle, the economic base, and the superstructure. Although not explicitly enunciated by Mao, it would appear that he perceived the forces of production, the relations of production and class struggle as the major constituent

28. MZDOC, p. 28; BZF I, p. 93; cf. SW I, pp. 335-6; XJ I, pp. 300-1. Emphasis added. Throughout this passage, Mao uses *zhudao* to indicate the "principal" (perhaps "leading" or "guiding") aspect; in the official text, this has been replaced throughout by *zhuyao*.

29. MZDOC, p. 24; BZF I, p. 85; cf. SW I, p. 328; XJ I, p. 292.

elements of the economic base of society. The superstructure is constituted of politics and ideology.

Secondly, Mao suggests that in this arrangement of elements, the forces of production is normally the determining influence in the relationship between the forces of production and the relations of production; likewise, the economic base generally is the determining influence in the relationship between the base and superstructure. This, of course, is no more than conventional Marxist theory. What is important here is that Mao explicitly goes beyond this conventional wisdom to assert a potential for causal effectivity for both the relations of production and the superstructure. They cannot be perceived, Mao insists, as mere lifeless reflections or effects of the forces of production or economic base respectively, and indeed, in "historically particular situations" they can become "principal and decisive."

It must be pointed out, however, that Mao's attribution of a "principal and decisive role" to the superstructure and relations of production is fairly carefully circumscribed by qualifications. Firstly, Mao makes it quite clear that "under normal conditions" (not specified by Mao, but probably a non-revolutionary situation in which society is relatively stable and there is only quantitative change) the superstructure and relations of production are not "principal and decisive", and that, in order to comprehend the nature and operation of a society during such "normal conditions" (*yiban qingxing*), one must examine either the economic base or the forces of production; for it is these which "generally play the principal and decisive role." Secondly, the assumption of a "principal and decisive role" by the superstructure and the relations of production occurs only at those

moments in history when they impede the further development of their opposite number. At such moments in history, the function of the superstructure and the relations of production takes on a dual character, that of obstruction and that of change. It would seem evident therefore that Mao perceived these entities as differentiated and lacking a necessary unanimity in social function. (This notion of differentiation will emerge as an increasingly important aspect of Mao's position when we turn subsequently to an analysis of his On New Democracy.) This potential for both obstruction and change exhibited by the relations of production and the superstructure derives not intrinsically, however, but from its generation by developments within the opposite number in the contradiction, within the forces of production or the economic base. Thus, for example, the capacity for change within the superstructure emerges as a function of developments within the economic base which, "under normal conditions", dictates the outcome of the relationship between these two aspects. However, the very fact that the superstructure has a differentiated function, and hence is capable of also obstructing further development by the economic base, permits it an increased degree of effectivity in those "historically particular situations" in which developments within the economic base have outpaced developments within the superstructure.

This increased degree of causal effectivity assumed by the superstructure does not indicate that Mao was prepared to concede to the superstructure the status of primary locus in historical causation. Rather, it is safer to regard its function as "principal and decisive" in obstructing and then facilitating changes generated elsewhere; while it might "sometimes" take on a "principal and decisive

role", that role could not be regarded as anything more than "principal and decisive" in temporally localized historical contexts in which factors extrinsic to the superstructure itself had allowed it the increased capacity to determine the rate, and to a certain extent the manner in which those extrinsically-generated forces could find resolution. This interpretation is reinforced by Mao's assertion that the contradiction between the base and the superstructure is a result of the development of the contradictions in the economic base itself.³⁰

Consequently, Mao's attribution of a "principal and decisive" role to the relations of production and the superstructure should not be hastily interpreted as a transferral of overall primacy in historical causation to those areas of society, but only as an attribution of a "principal and decisive role" within the parameters anteriorly defined by the forces of production and the economic base. Thus, the superstructure, by obstructing and then resolving pressures for change emanating from the economic base, had the capacity for a degree of social and historical influence, but it could not autonomously create those factors which constituted the historical framework within which it operated. While this influence was not, in Mao's opinion, exiguous, it was an influence by virtue of the primacy of the economic base which had initially generated the elements of the superstructure and established the thresholds for potential superstructural effectivity; an influence well removed from the primary locus of historical causation which remained within the economic base.

By token of this interpretation, neither the relations of production nor the superstructure could in any sense be regarded as social categories autonomously responsible for the creation and

30. Ibid.

structuring of society; not only was the apogee of their historical influence strictly limited temporally, they perforce operated within a social structure and an historical context whose limits and defining regularities owed initial generation to the economic base, and within that base to the forces of production.

It is necessary to make this qualification, as Mao's attribution of a "principal and decisive role" to the function of the superstructure is sometimes incorrectly perceived as a transferral of overall historical primacy to the superstructure.³¹ This qualification made, however, it is clear that Mao was seeking to find a formula within a materialist framework in which he could find some role for the superstructure other than that of a lifeless "reflection" of the economic base. By conferring on the superstructure a capacity to influence the development of society through the obstruction or facilitation of change and developments within the economic base, he appeared to be signalling a readiness to perceive in social function something of a dialectical process in which historical influence was, if not equally reciprocal between base and superstructure, at least not the sole prerogative of society's economic base. It is also probable that this attempt to establish within the confines of Soviet Marxism the flexibility necessary to incorporate the "many particular situations" in history which did not appear capable of accommodation within a theory in which the direction of historical influence was merely unidirectional, betokened Mao's early determination to forge a theory in which the elucidation of the particular would be the paramount objective. Mao's sensitivity to the particular instance

31. See for example Cohen, *Op. cit.*, p. 23; see also Tang Tsou, "Mao Tse-tung Thought, the Last Struggle for Succession and the Post-Mao Era," *The China Quarterly* 71 (September 1979), pp. 498-504.

within history was acute (see Section III below), and it is probable that his initiative here was a first step toward the formulation of a theoretical framework by which particular and possibly unique historical situations could find explanation within a flexible materialist conception of history. As such, it logically precedes Mao's "Sinification" speech of October 1938, which had as its *leit-motif* the accommodation of the "historically particular situation" within the confines of a universal theory of history.

A comment needs to be made here on the "originality" of Mao's position on historical causation as suggested in On Contradiction. Arthur Cohen has argued (on the assumption that On Contradiction was written not in 1937, but prior to its official publication in 1952) that Mao's concession of a "principal and decisive role" to the superstructure was merely a thinly-disguised copy of Stalin's position as enunciated in his important theoretical works of 1938 and 1950.³² In these writings, Stalin allowed that superstructural elements such as beliefs and theories could have an "important role and significance in the life of society."³³ However, if, as now seems likely, On Contradiction was originally penned by Mao in August 1937, it could well be that Mao may have anticipated Stalin on this issue. If this is the case, then Mao can be attributed with having taken one of the first steps towards loosening the intellectual shackles of the orthodox Marxist interpretation of history, and seeking a theoretical position which would not only allow the superstructure a meaningful role in the development of society, but which would also allow a recognition of diversity and uniqueness in the historical process.

32. Ibid.

33. Stalin, Problems of Leninism, Op. cit., p. 851.

The position on causation set out by Mao in On Contradiction can be portrayed diagrammatically as follows:

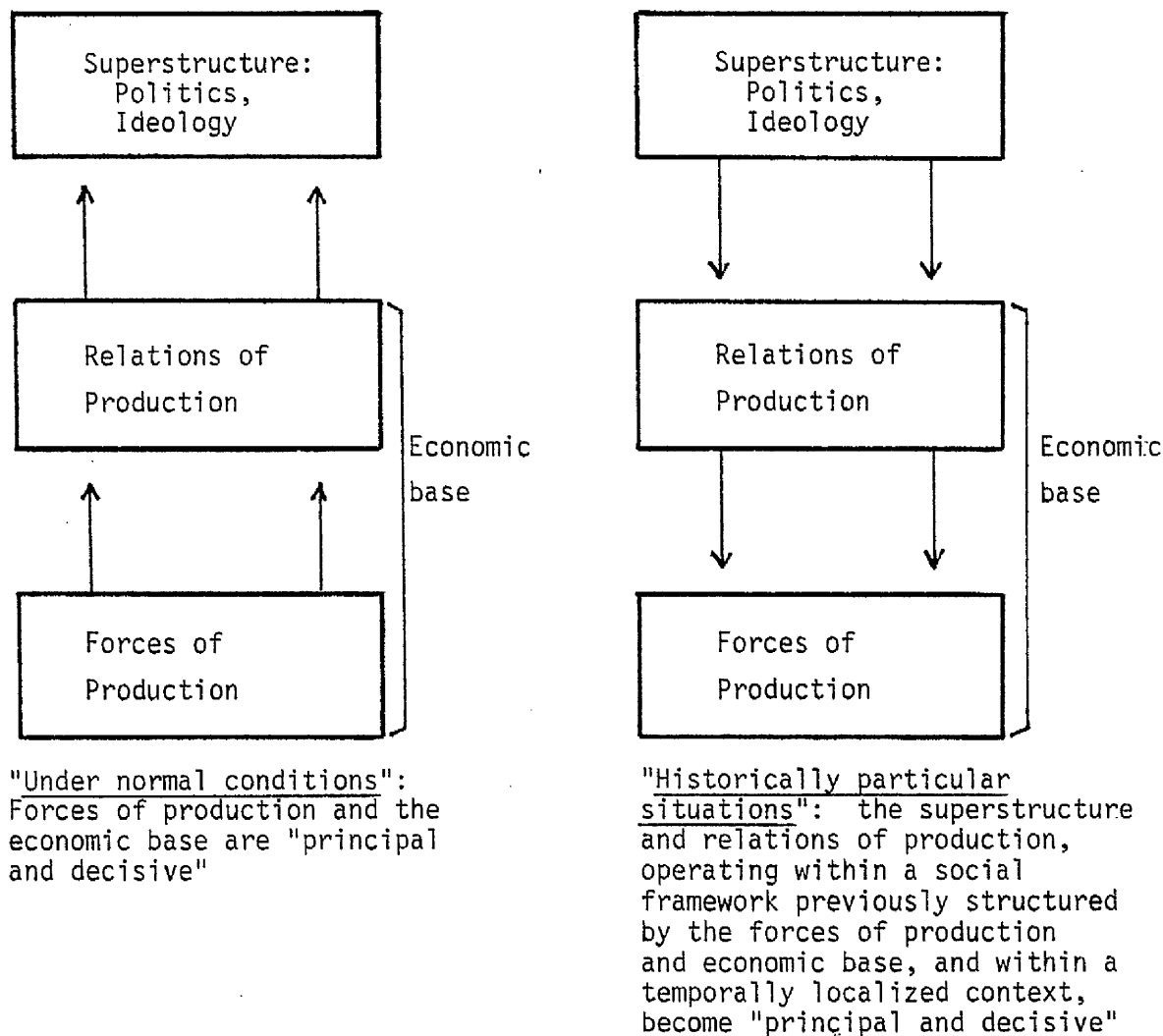


FIGURE 2: On Contradiction

We might pause at this moment to reflect on the differences between the two documents analyzed thus far. The position which emerged in On One-Party Dictatorship (1938) appears as more orthodox and certainly less flexible than that suggested in On Contradiction (1937). In the former text, political institutions such as the political party are portrayed as effects or functions of the "social base" of society and the economy generally; and they are accorded

influence only over other political institutions or parties, there being no concession to the possibility that the party could fundamentally alter the nature of the "social base". In On Contradiction, however, Mao was obviously prepared to move beyond this position and allow the possibility that the superstructure could have an important influence on the economic base, even if such a possibility was carefully hedged around by qualifications. How are we to explain this disparity, especially when On One-Party Dictatorship appeared after On Contradiction was apparently written?

It must be pointed out that On One-Party Dictatorship is not a formal essay as is On Contradiction, but takes the form of a question-and-answer session between Mao and a reporter from the Xin Zhonghua bao (New China News). It was certainly not a spontaneous interview, as Mao was well-prepared with lengthy quotes from Stalin and Lenin, and it is probable that he had given ample thought to his responses to possibly prearranged questions. His answers were therefore not off-the-cuff, and should be taken as a serious effort to provide at least some sort of causal explanation of different one-party systems. Nevertheless, it is also clear that Mao was consciously working well within the guidelines of what he perceived to be orthodox Soviet Marxism, and there are strong echoes of Stalin's 1936 position in Mao's analysis. Moreover, the fact that the interview was for publication may have made Mao more cautious and more inclined to orthodoxy than his own predilections would have liked. On Contradiction, on the other hand, was almost certainly written as a lecture for the Anti-Japanese Military and Political University at Yan'an.³⁴ Consequently, Mao was probably concerned less with orthodoxy than with presenting his

34. Bisson, Op. cit., p. 37.

students a theoretical framework which might allow insights into an "historically particular situation" such as the Chinese revolution.

We can, however, gain no more than a fleeting impression of Mao's position on causation from On Contradiction, for he does not appear to have again utilized in any other document of the Yan'an period the social category of the superstructure or its contradiction with its economic base.³⁵ This quite astonishing lacuna is (as we shall subsequently observe) in stark contrast to the texts of the post-1955 period in which the superstructure came increasingly to the fore as a social category demanding Mao's attention. This lacuna also warns against making easy generalizations about Mao's position on the superstructure, for such generalizations, which abound in secondary critiques of Mao's thought, would almost certainly be incorrect for the Yan'an period at least. It also reinforces the assumption on which this study is founded that Mao's writings cannot be perceived or analyzed as a supra-historical whole, and that they must be anchored historically through the employment of a periodization in the development of his thought.

The failure to employ the concept of the superstructure after 1937 indicates also that Mao probably predominantly utilized other conceptual categories in approaching the study of society and history during the Yan'an period. These categories emerge in their most complete theoretical form in On New Democracy (1940). This document provides evidence of a clear development in Mao's views on the problem of historical causation, and it must be regarded as central to an

35. In fact, I have been able to isolate only one other reference to the superstructure in the Yan'an writings, and even this occurs in a quote from Stalin in the first chapter of The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party, a chapter not written by Mao but included in his Selected Works; see SW II, p. 312; XJ II, p. 592; Ji VII, p. 107.

understanding of his position during the Yan'an period.

In On New Democracy, Mao differentiates between three regions or elements of society; "economics", "politics", and "culture".

This tripartite division of society emerges clearly in the following passage:

Any given culture (as an ideological form) is a reflection of the politics and economics of a given society, and the former in turn has a tremendous influence upon the latter; and politics is the concentrated expression of economics. This is our fundamental view of the relation of culture to politics and of the relation of politics to economics.³⁶

This passage is of considerable importance for an understanding of Mao's position, and this for the following reasons. Firstly, the tripartite division of society itself is worthy of note. It would appear from this passage and from Mao's general lack of usage of the base/superstructure dichotomy during the Yan'an period that he perceived a conceptual division of society into only two distinct elements as insufficient for a precise understanding of social function, and particularly the role of politics in social life.

Secondly, and following on from this point, it is clear that Mao perceived the necessity for a conceptual distinction between "politics" and "culture". It will be remembered that in On Contradiction, Mao had defined the superstructure as constituted of both "politics" and "culture;³⁷ and as part of the same social category, both had been attributed with the same capacity for historical causal effectivity. This equivalence in causal effectivity between "politics" and "culture"

36. Ji VII, p. 149; cf. SW II, p. 340; XJ II, p. 624; in the original text, Mao does not refer to economics as the "base" (*jichu*).

37. MZDOC, p. 28; BZF I, p. 93; SW I, p. 336; XJ I, 301.

disappears with the tripartite formulation of On New Democracy.

Thirdly, politics is provided with a definition which allows it a far more prominent role in social function than was the case with previous formulations. "Politics," Mao asserts, is the "concentrated expression (*jizhong de biaoqian*) of economics." This definition of "politics" had first been coined by Lenin. Lenin, however, had utilized the definition in a rather different context, and in a sense rather different from that which Mao extracted from it. Lenin had in fact utilized the definition in a series of articles attacking the "economic" policies for the trades union held by Trotsky and Bukharin, and suggesting that his own "political" approach (which had been misrepresented by his opponents) was in fact the appropriate policy for the union movement:

It is strange that we should have to return to such elementary questions, but we are forced to do so by Trotsky and Bukharin. They have both reproached me for "switching" the issue, or for taking a "political" approach, while theirs is an "economic" one...

This is a glaring theoretical error. I said again in my speech that politics is the concentrated expression of economics, because I had earlier heard my "political" approach rebuked in a manner which is inconsistent and inadmissible for a Marxist. Politics must take precedence over economics. To argue otherwise is to forget the ABC of Marxism.....

What the political approach means, in other words, is that the wrong attitude to the trade unions will ruin the Soviet power and topple the dictatorship of the proletariat.³⁸

It would appear then that Mao largely ignored the context within which Lenin had made this reference to "politics" as the "concentrated

38. V.I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin," in Lenin, Collected Works, Op. cit., XXXII, p. 83.

expression of economics", and he chose to interpret Lenin's remarks in a manner which allowed him to construct a tripartite conceptualization of society in which politics constituted an important element. Indeed, it is evident from comments made later in the Yan'an period that this conception of "politics" as the "concentrated expression of economics" persisted as an important medium for the interpretation of society. In his Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art (1942), Mao argued that:

...only through politics can the needs of the class and the masses find expression in concentrated form (*jizhong di biao xian chulai*). Revolutionary statesmen, the political specialists who know the science or art of revolutionary politics, are simply the leaders of millions upon millions of statesmen--the masses. Their task is to collect the opinions of these mass statesmen, sift and refine them, and return them to the masses, who then take them and put them into practice.³⁹

The connection between the concept of "politics" as the "concentrated expression of economics" and the notion of the "mass-line" is clearly drawn here, and in his important document of June 1943 entitled Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership, Mao was again to emphasize the function of "politics" as being to "concentrate" (*jizhong chulai*) the "scattered and unsystematic" ideas of the masses.⁴⁰ Mao therefore perceived "politics" as able to concentrate the perhaps scattered and unarticulated aspirations of the members of an economic class. Consequently, "politics" would appear to perform a pivotal function in the process of increasing the social cohesion and unity of identification of members of an economic class;

39. SW III, pp. 86-7; XJ III, p. 823; Ji VIII, p. 135.

40. SW III, p. 119; XJ III, p. 854; Ji IX, pp. 27-8; PRD, p. 179; see also SW IV (1956), p. 205.

that is, in the process in which a class develops from being a class-in-itself to being a class-for-itself. Mao's rather inexact borrowing of Lenin's reference to "politics" as the "concentrated expression of economics" was therefore to have far-reaching implications, not only for the manner in which he perceived causation in society, but also for his distinctive theories of organization and leadership.

On the basis of this rather inexact borrowing of Lenin's remarks, Mao was to therefore suggest that "politics" could no longer be perceived (as his On Contradiction formulation would indicate) as a mere reflection or function of the economic base, and with only a limited capacity for influencing the development of society. Rather, "politics" had been promoted within the causal chain to the extent that we now find "culture" being a "reflection", not just of "economics", but of "economics" and "politics" combined; "Culture," Mao argued, "is a reflection of the politics and economics of a given society."⁴¹ In another passage from On New Democracy, Mao was to develop the notion of a union of "economics" and "politics" as being responsible for the production of the "culture" of a society:

The old politics and economics of the Chinese nation form the basis (*genju*) of its old culture, just as its new politics and economics will form the basis of its new culture.⁴²

In this passage, Mao has constructed a new category--the "basis" (*genju*)--out of a combination of "politics" and "economics". The "basis" of society represents the causal matrix from which "culture" emerges; "culture" is a "reflection" of, and is determined by, this

41. SW II, p. 340; XJ II, p. 624; Ji VII, p. 149. Emphasis added.

42. SW II, p. 341; XJ II, p. 625; Ji VII, p. 150.

union of "politics" and "economics". Although the concept of a "social basis" (*shehui genju*) had emerged in an earlier text (c. 1937),⁴³ it is only in On New Democracy that the notion of a "basis" comprised of "politics" and "economics" becomes a major social category in Mao's thought. Why had Mao felt it necessary to construct such a category, and how did he employ it to make causal explanations about the nature of social development? We can perhaps best answer these pertinent questions by exploring both the nature and function of the different elements of this "basis" of society, and then move on to analyze the causal role attributed to "culture" by Mao.

Mao included in the category of "economics" both the forces of production and the class relations of production. In On New Democracy, Mao referred to the "economic structure" (*jingji goucheng*) of society, and this term encompassed wealth-producing factors, as well as the class relationships which had emerged around such factors on the basis of ownership and production. The wealth-producing factors included industrial and commercial enterprises (such as banks and railways), and land.⁴⁴ However, for Mao the ownership and management of these wealth-producing factors were just as much a part of "economics" as these factors themselves,⁴⁵ and in his discussion of the "economics" of New Democracy, the regulation of capital is included as a major feature. "Economics" therefore incorporated class relations on the basis of ownership. This is made evident if we turn to Chapter 1 of The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party (1939),⁴⁶ in which there is frequent

43. Ji VI, p. 268.

44. SW II, p. 353; XJ II, p. 639; Ji VII, p. 167.

45. This is made clear in Ibid.

46. Although the first chapter of this document was not written by Mao, it was revised by him prior to its inclusion in his Selected Works. It has therefore been accepted here as reflecting his opinion. See the editorial note at SW II, p. 305.

reference to the "economic exploitation" (*jingji boxue*) which the peasantry in China had suffered because of ownership of land by the landlord class.⁴⁷ This document also makes clear that the development of the wealth-producing factors of capitalism in China had given rise to certain characteristic economic relationships:

The history of the emergence and development of national capitalism is at the same time the history of the emergence and development of the Chinese bourgeoisie and proletariat. Just as a section of the merchants, landlords and bureaucrats were precursors of the Chinese bourgeoisie, so a section of the peasants and handicraft workers were the precursors of the Chinese proletariat...However, the Chinese proletariat emerged and grew simultaneously not only with the Chinese national bourgeoisie but also with the enterprises directly operated by the imperialists in China.⁴⁸

Mao was also to refer to the economic "status" (*diwei*) of the classes in Chinese society, and to argue that this "entirely determined" their attitude and stand towards the Chinese revolution.⁴⁹

Having briefly identified the constituent elements of the category of "economics", let us pass on immediately to a discussion of Mao's usage of the concept of "politics"; for in so doing, it will become evident that Mao was not inclined to an easy attribution of overall causal primacy to "economics" in social development. The picture which emerges is rather more complex.

For Mao, the category of "politics" subsumed many important features of social life. The first of these was class struggle. In our brief reconstruction, it was noted that Mao included under the rubric "economics" the structure of class relations which emerged from and were characteristic of a particular mode of production.

47. SW II, p. 308; XJ II, p. 588; Ji VII, p. 102.

48. SW II, p. 310; XJ II, p. 590; Ji VII, pp. 104-5.

49. SW II, p. 319; XJ II, p. 601; Ji VII, pp. 117-8.

However, it appears that Mao perceived the actual struggle between classes within this structure of class relations as political in the broadest sense; class struggle was a manifestation in intensified form of the hostility between classes within this structure of class relations, and this hostility was made manifest in the realm of "politics". It is no coincidence that Mao commences his discussion of the "politics" of New Democracy with an analysis of the role that the various classes of Chinese society had played in the Chinese revolution. The struggle to establish and defend their economic interests is portrayed by Mao as being a political struggle.⁵⁰

This manifestation of the hostility in economic relations at a political level was facilitated by certain political institutions which emerged to represent particular class interests. Foremost amongst such political institutions was the political party. "The party is," Mao declared (1938), "an organization of the most conscious section of a class."⁵¹ Mao consistently perceived political parties as representing certain class interests, and although he was prepared (as we have seen) to allow that a party might provide political representation for more than one class, the link between economic class(es) and political party remained intact in his thought. There is ample evidence in Mao's writing to demonstrate this perceived link between economic classes and the political party; moreover, he consistently mobilized a class analysis to explain the actions of political parties. For example, in On Contradiction, Mao had invoked the "class character" (*jiejixing*) of the Guomindang to explain its abrupt change of policy in 1927.⁵² Similarly, the Guomindang is portrayed in On New Democracy

50. SW II, pp. 348-352; XJ II, pp. 633-638; Ji VII, pp. 160-66.

51. Ji V, p. 305.

52. MZDOC, p. 31; BZF I, p. 97; SW I, p. 339; XJ I, p. 303.

as being the political representative of the "big bourgeoisie",⁵³ and in On Coalition Government (1945) as the representative of the "big landlords, bankers and compradores."⁵⁴ Mao also perceived the Chinese Communist Party as representing various class interests, and especially the industrial proletariat and the peasantry. The Chinese Communist Party's sociological connection with the proletariat was a self-evident one for Mao, and its representation of peasant interests was a "specific feature" of Chinese society and the Chinese revolution.⁵⁵ This representation of the peasantry by the Communist Party was perceived by Mao as resulting from the fact that no party had emerged to exclusively represent the economic interests of the peasantry; "As China has no political party exclusively representing the peasants...the Chinese Communist Party has become the leader of the peasants...being the only party that has formulated and carried out a thoroughgoing land programme..."⁵⁶

Such examples could be multiplied many times. The important point remains that Mao perceived political parties as representing economic class interests. Another important feature of social life included by Mao in "politics" was the state or "state system" (*guoti*).⁵⁷ Mao's interpretation of the state ran along fairly conventional Marxist lines, and he viewed it as a political organ of class domination at the behest of the ruling class. In Chapter 1 of The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party, there appears an analysis of the state during China's feudal period:

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- 53. SW II, p. 349; XJ II, p. 634; Ji VII, p. 162.
 - 54. SW III, p. 248; XJ III, p. 976; Ji IX, p. 245.
 - 55. SW II, p. 287; XJ II, p. 568; Ji VII, p. 72.
 - 56. SW III, p. 248; XJ III, p. 976; Ji IX, p. 245.
 - 57. SW II, p. 351; XJ II, p. 637; Ji VII, p. 165.

The feudal landlord state was the organ of power protecting this system of feudal exploitation... The emperor reigned supreme in the feudal state, appointing officials in charge of the armed forces, the law courts, the treasury and state granaries in all parts of the country and relying on the landed gentry as the mainstay of the entire system of feudal rule.⁵⁸

It is quite clear from this passage that Mao perceived the state in class terms. Likewise, in On New Democracy, Mao argued that the "state system" is a "question of the status of the various social classes within the state (*guojia*),"⁵⁹ and it is evident from his taxonomy of state systems that the classification had been achieved on the basis of the arrangement of classes, with special attention being paid to the ruling class. Mao's rather limited taxonomy of state systems thus included: (1) republics under bourgeois dictatorship; (2) republics under the dictatorship of the proletariat; and (3) republics under the joint dictatorship of several revolutionary classes. These three basic kinds of state system had been arrived at "according to the class character of their political power."⁶⁰

This emphasis on the rule by one or more classes was characteristic of Mao's views on the state during the Yan'an period; where a class society existed, there would exist a state which ruled in the interests of the dominant economic class(es). It is for this reason that Robert E. Bedeski appears to have greatly over-emphasized Mao's debt to Sun Yat-sen in formulating his conception of the state. This conception was predicated on the assumption of a class society and consequent class struggle, a clearly Marxist formulation; Sun's

58. SW II, p. 307; XJ II, p. 587; Ji VII, p. 101.

59. SW II, p. 351; XJ II, p. 637; Ji VII, p. 165.

60. SW II, p. 350; XJ II, p. 636; Ji VII, pp. 163-4.

view of the state was predicated rather on the harmonization of classes. Bedeski's error lies in his interpretation of Mao's call for the adjustment of class struggle during the Yan'an period as being a call for the harmonization of classes, which it definitely was not; the element of class struggle persisted, "struggle" and "alliance" in a unity of opposites, "alliance" being temporary and relative, while "struggle" was permanent and absolute.⁶¹ To impute the notion of inter-class harmony to this arrangement is therefore to attribute to Mao and his conception of the state an extremely uncharacteristic ingredient.⁶²

It emerges from Mao's writings of the Yan'an period that he perceived a distinction between the "state system" and the complex of institutions whose function was the actual translation of ruling class interests into manifest political forms; such institutions could include the government, army, legal system, and the bureaucracy.⁶³ This distinction emerges most clearly when Mao turns his attention to the role of government within society:

As for the question of the "system of government" (*zhengti*) this is a matter of how political power is organized, the form in which one social class or another chooses to arrange its apparatus of political power to oppose its enemies and protect itself. There is no state (*guojia*) which does not have an appropriate apparatus of political power to represent it.⁶⁴

Mao goes on to suggest that the most appropriate "system of

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- 61. SW III, p. 14; XJ III, pp. 750-1; Ji VII, p. 298.
 - 62. Robert E. Bedeski, "The Concept of the State: Sun Yat-sen and Mao Tse-tung," The China Quarterly, No. 70 (June 1977), pp. 338-354.
 - 63. SW II, p. 307; XJ II, p. 587; Ji VII, p. 101.
 - 64. SW II, p. 352; XJ II, p. 638; Ji VII, p. 165.

government" for New Democracy would be a democratic centralist system in which people's congresses at all levels from national down to township would be based on a universal suffrage. This was the "system of government" (*zhengti*) envisaged by Mao. In contrast, the "state system" would be a "joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes." Moreover, not only did Mao indicate a distinction between the "system of government" and the "state system," he raised the possibility that the two might be "out of harmony" (*buxiang shiying*).⁶⁵

In On Coalition Government, Mao was to return to the distinction which he perceived between state and government, and also to indicate the role of the army as an integral part of the complex of institutions which comprised the "state":

'The army (*jundui*) belongs to the state' (*guojia*)-- that is perfectly true, and there is not an army in the world that does not belong to a state...The only kind of state for China to establish is a new-democratic state and, on that basis, she should establish a new-democratic coalition government; all the armed forces of China must belong to such a government of such a state...⁶⁶

Similarly, Mao had referred previously (1938) to the Marxist theory of the state and the role attributed to the armed forces within this theory; "According to the Marxist theory of the state (*guojia xueshuo*), the army is the chief component of state power (*guojia zhengquan*). Whoever wants to seize and retain state power must have a strong army."⁶⁷ It would appear that Mao regarded the army as operating under the administration of the government, the government itself being the principal organizational apparatus of the state.

65. Ibid.

66. SW III, p. 246; XJ III, p. 974; Ji IX, p. 241.

67. SW II, p. 225; XJ II, p. 512.

Mao therefore represented the "state system" (*guoti*) in class terms. The "state system" was, as we have seen, "a question of the status of the various social classes within the state." Consequently, one could portray a "state system" in terms of class rule, such as the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. While the concept of the "state system" entailed the notion of class rule, it suggested the political (rather than purely economic) aspects of class rule. The "state system" reflected the relative arrangement of classes within society. The "state" (*guojia*), on the other hand, consisted of the complex of political institutions employed by the ruling class to reinforce its own economic position and to suppress its class opponents; of these the government and the army were the most important.

The importance of this distinction between the "state system" and the "system of government" will become evident if we turn to an analysis of the causal role of "politics" within Mao's conception of the "basis" (*genju*), and in his tripartite conceptualization of society generally.

For Mao, "politics" was "the concentrated expression of economics," and he located it within the "basis" of society, the combination of "economics" and "politics" which was the causal matrix which gave rise to a society's "culture." The constituent elements of "politics" were identified as such institutions as political parties, the state, government, the army, and so on. In what sense could such political institutions be a "concentrated expression of economics," and what was the causal relationship between such institutions and the forces and relations of production which constituted "economics"?

We have already drawn attention to the fact that Mao perceived "politics" as allowing "the needs of the class and the masses to find expression in concentrated form"; indeed, it was "only through politics" that this could be achieved.⁶⁸ On this premise, Mao was to formulate a theory of political leadership which took as its starting point the notion that political leaders and the political institutions they led could actively concentrate the "scattered and unsystematic" aspirations and attitudes of a class. "Politics" could therefore assume a central role in building class consciousness and cohesiveness, and in organizing a class for its own defence. "Politics" therefore was attributed with an activist role, for it was a factor for the concentration and organization of a class. Without "politics", an economic class could not successfully prosecute its own interests, or alter social conditions invidious to it.

While Mao thus attributed an extremely important role to "politics", it must be remembered that the emergence of certain economic conditions such as a particular form of production or class structure necessarily preceded the emergence of "politics". "Politics" was a "concentrated expression of economics", and could not therefore exist autonomously or emerge prior to the necessary economic conditions. Mao would have, for example, regarded it as an historical impossibility for a communist party to exist prior to the establishment of modern industry and an industrial proletariat. Once such economic conditions had developed, however, the "politics" which emerged as a result could constitute a factor for the concentration of the energies and attitudes of the proletariat. The subsequent development of the economic position of that class was thus dependent upon the efficacy

68. SW III, pp. 86-7; XJ III, p. 823; Ji VIII, p. 135.

of its "politics".

An explanation of the persistence or change of a particular society thus could not ignore the role of "politics". An illustration of this point can be made by reference to the feudal society of traditional China. Mao obviously perceived the peasantry of traditional society as lacking such effective political representation; the peasants were ill-organized and could not, despite numerous rebellions, translate economic disaffection into meaningful opposition to the feudal system. The "politics" of feudal society was by and large the "politics" of the landlord class, which produced its "politics" in the form of a state which allowed the persistence of the feudal society and with it the economic domination of the landlord class. An explanation of the longevity of the feudal mode of production in China would therefore have to incorporate reference to the important role played by "politics".⁶⁹

The important feature of traditional Chinese society was, of course, that its mode of production was a largely undifferentiated feudalism. However, in a differentiated society with several modes of production, such as China became after Western intervention, "politics" also became differentiated, allowing a significant threat to be posed at a political level to the "politics" of the formerly dominant economic class.⁷⁰

Consequently, while the emergence of "politics" was for Mao subsequent to "economics", the causal relationship between the two was a reciprocal one; moreover, causal dominance, at first the

69. SW II, p. 308; XJ II, p. 588, Ji VII, p. 102.

70. See SW II, p. 341; XJ II, p. 625; Ji VII, p. 150.

prerogative of "economics", passed over to "politics" as it assumed the role of concentrating class attitudes and energies, and establishing political institutions for a defence of class interests. While causal dominance might pass over to "politics", "economics" would however continue to exercise an important though often largely residual influence by restraining the variability of "politics", and thus the limits to potential change.

Let us depict diagrammatically the picture that has emerged from our analysis thus far, before moving on to a more detailed consideration of the causal potential of the realm of "politics".

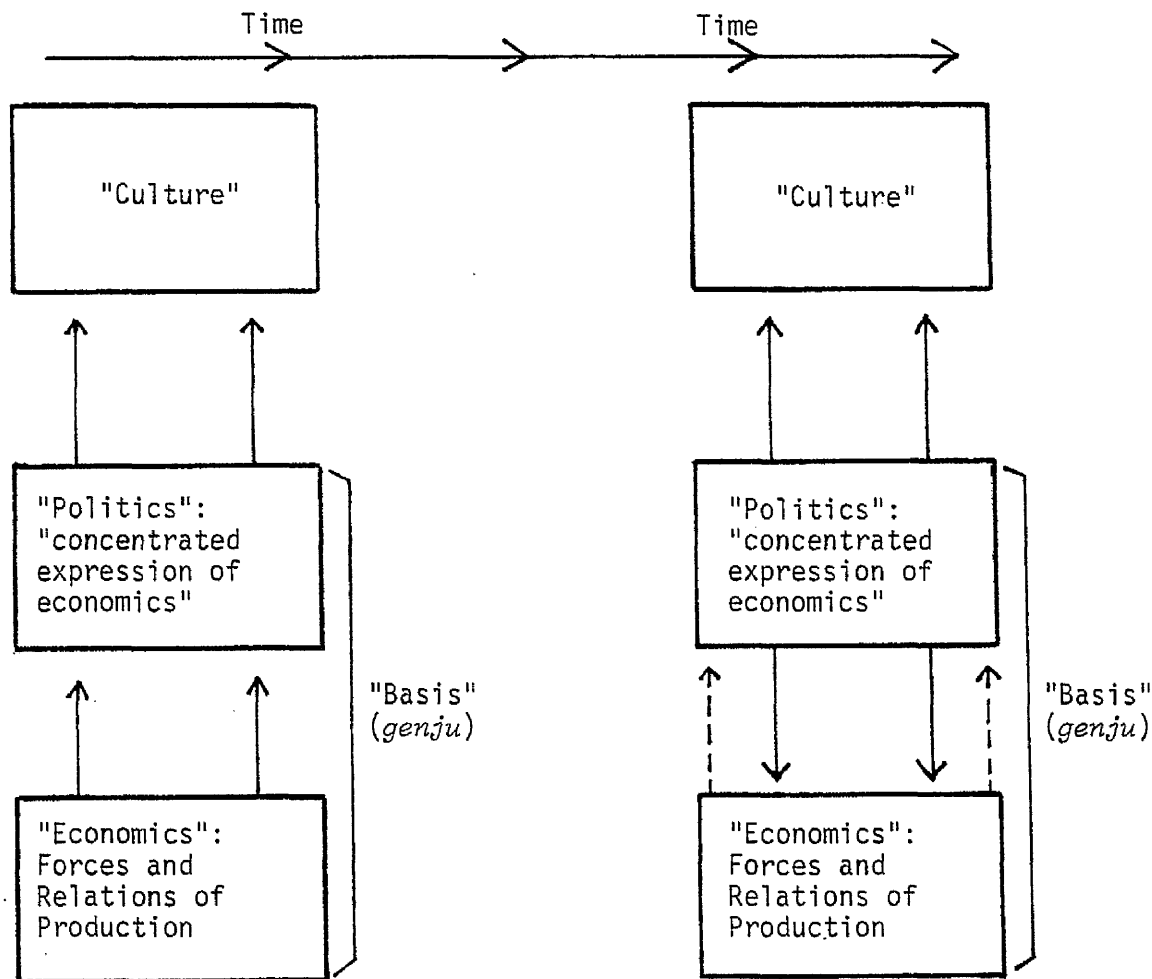


FIGURE 3: On New Democracy

The important distinction between this position and the position articulated in On Contradiction is that, beside making "culture" a function of both "politics" and "economics", Mao did not in this later position limit the influence of "politics" to "historically particular situations". Rather, once created by the requisite "economics", "politics" could maintain the initiative historically and persist in prosecuting the struggle to achieve the interests of the economic class which had produced it.

Both the limits and potential of "politics" in the historical process can be demonstrated by reference to several important issues of concern to Mao during the Yan'an period; the adjustment of class struggle, and the role of government in society. Let us look firstly at the way in which Mao perceived the possibility of a "political" adjustment of class struggle.

During the period of the Second United Front, Mao called on several occasions for the adjustment of class struggle. Such calls were made at times when the extent of class struggle threatened to jeopardize the four-class bloc viewed as essential by Mao for the successful prosecution of the Anti-Japanese War. In his address to the Sixth Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee (1938), Mao made the following instructive statement:

The same is true of the relationship between the class struggle and the national struggle. It is an established principle that in the War of Resistance everything must be subordinated to, and must not conflict with, the interests and demands of the national struggle. The interests and demands of the class struggle must be subordinated to, and must not conflict with, the interests and demands of the national struggle. At the same time, however, under the conditions existing in class society, class

struggle cannot be eliminated; there is no way that it can be eliminated (*wufa xiaomie*). The theory which fundamentally denies the existence of class struggle is a theory which misrepresents the facts (*waiqu de lilun*). We do not deny the class struggle, we adjust (*tiaojie*) it.⁷¹

Similarly, some seven years later Mao was to assert in On Coalition Government that the adjustment of class struggle could constitute the premise on which China's future politico-economic system might function. Once again, however, Mao was concerned to stress that the divisions and contradictions between China's classes would not just disappear:

Of course, there are still contradictions among these classes, notably the contradiction between labour and capital, and consequently each has its own demands. It would be hypocritical to deny the existence of these contradictions and differing demands. But throughout the stage of New Democracy, these contradictions, these differing demands, will not grow and transcend the demands which all have in common and should not be allowed to do so; they can be adjusted (*tiaojie*). Given such adjustment, these classes can together accomplish the political, economic and cultural tasks of the new-democratic state.⁷²

Mao believed therefore that the class struggle could be adjusted and that the motivation for this adjustment came from within the realm of "politics". In both of the passages quoted above, Mao appears to suggest that there could be an interest which transcended something as fundamental as class interest, and that the various classes had a communality of interests which overrode an unrestrained pursuit of class interest. This interest was of course the national interest. This appeal to a seemingly supra-class conception such as the nation should not, however, lead to the assumption that the global categories

71. Ji VI, p. 248; cf. SW II, p. 200; XJ II, p. 491.

72. SW III, p. 230; XJ III, p. 957; Ji IX, p. 219.

employed by Mao (such as the nation, the people, the masses) were above and beyond the restraints of class division and struggle. On the contrary, Mao regarded class division and class struggle as the most fundamental features of society, and reference to such global categories assumed an intrinsic differentiation along class lines. Mao did not, for example, perceive the "common people" (*laobaixing*) as had other Chinese populists such as Feng Yuxiang; Feng had perceived the *laobaixing* as a largely undifferentiated and preferably passive entity upon which reforms and benefits might be bestowed.⁷³ In contrast, Mao's references to "the people" (*renmin*) made no assertion or assumption of the undifferentiated nature of "the people" as a category. Rather, the Marxist emphasis on class formations and class struggle which pervaded Mao's thought led to a perception of "the people" as an amalgamation or alliance of classes. The fact that such classes were willing to be included in class alliances of this nature was due, Mao would have argued, to their perception that their economic class interests would best be served through their inclusion. The fundamental reason for the possibility of class alliances was therefore economic class interest. Global categories (such as the nation) thus presumed class differentiation and class alliance based on a presumption of an advancement of class interest for the classes concerned. They also presumed a continuing contradiction and a muted class struggle between the classes of such alliances.

"Politics" therefore could modify or adjust class struggle, but

73. See James E. Sheridan, Chinese Warlord: The Career of Feng Yu-hsiang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), esp. Chapter 12. For a discussion of the "populist" element in Mao's thought, see James R. Townsend, "Chinese Populism and the Legacy of Mao Tse-tung", Asian Survey XVII (November 1977), No. 11, pp. 1003-1015; also Maurice Meisner, "Leninism and Maoism: Some Populist Perspectives on Marxism-Leninism", The China Quarterly 45 (1971), pp. 2-36.

it was beyond the capacity of "politics" to "eliminate" class struggle altogether. As Mao had pointed out in On the New Stage (1938), "class struggle cannot be eliminated",⁷⁴ and in response to a correspondent's question in 1937, Mao had insisted that "prior to the elimination of the class system, there is no way that class contradictions can be abolished".⁷⁵

Why and how did Mao perceive "politics" as having the capacity to adjust the class struggle? Firstly, Mao's call for the adjustment of class struggle during the Yan'an period was predicated on the specific characteristics of the historical situation which obtained at that time in China. Of these, the existence of certain classes, and the form and extent of struggle between them, were central. Mao believed that the existence of classes and class struggle was a fundamental characteristic of all human societies except the most primitive. However, the assertion of class and class struggle as a fundamental identifying feature of society could not indicate the form that classes or class struggle might adopt at any given point in history; there were clearly specific manifestations of the general rule. The nature of the class struggle at any given historical moment could not be deduced from the generalized status of class struggle in human society. Consequently, analysis of any historical context, while predicated on class assumptions, had to examine the particular form in which class struggle had become manifest in that context. Class struggle did not pursue any necessarily preordained pattern, but found manifestation in specific form by virtue of the constraints and possibilities imposed by a developing historical situation. Within the framework

74. Ji VI, p. 248; SW II, p. 200; XJ II, p. 491.

75. Ji V, p. 225.

provided by such constraints and possibilities, the class struggle emerged and proceeded. The historically-induced nature of a particular class struggle determined the extent to which it developed, its intensity and breadth, and most importantly, the flexibility of its operation. The class struggle in China, while once again providing evidence of class struggle as a general feature of human society, portrayed its own specific characteristics which had to be correctly interpreted in order that an appropriate "political" strategy could be formulated. Mao's analysis of the Chinese context during the Yan'an period suggested the possibility that the class struggle was amenable to adjustment; for the adjustment would be predicated on a perception by the classes that, because of the threat posed by Japanese imperialism, their best interests would be served through such an adjustment.

Therefore, although the concept of adjustment might leave the impression that Mao perceived the class struggle as being readily and mechanically amenable to the application of a "political" throttle, it must be remembered that his calls for adjustment were made within specific historical contexts in which he perceived the possible effectivity of such "political" action. Moreover, his calls for the adjustment of class struggle did not presume a radical alteration in social stratification by purely "political" means, or the possible elimination of the contradictions existing between classes; it signified rather a belief in the possibility of increasing or decreasing the general intensity of the already existing form of that struggle. During the Yan'an period, the class contradictions between landlord and peasant could be modified, but not eliminated; likewise the contradiction between labour and capital. In 1937, Mao had indicated the "political" measures which could be taken to modify the intensity of

these contradictions:

...within the programme of the United Front, we advocate giving the people democratic rights politically, and economically an improvement in their livelihood. If the workers and peasants are oppressed, it is inevitable that they will rise up in resistance; only by giving them democratic rights and an improvement in their livelihood can a start be made in reducing this contradiction.⁷⁶

More specifically, Mao urged that the people be given an assembly, freedom of speech and association, and universal suffrage; economically, workers should receive better remuneration and improved conditions of labour, while the peasantry be granted reduced rent and taxes. The land question itself should be the subject of legislative procedures and action.⁷⁷ These were some of the "political" measures perceived by Mao as necessary for any adjustment of class struggle to be effective.

Secondly, it must be remembered that Mao no longer included "politics" in the superstructure of society as he had in On Contradiction. "Politics" was an integral part of society's "basis" (*genju*), and combined with "economics" it constituted the causal matrix which produced "culture". The notion of a "political" adjustment of class struggle did not, therefore, denote a purely superstructural intervention in the economic sphere of society, but rather an historical action emanating from within the causal "basis" of society. At any rate, Mao appears to have perceived class struggle itself in largely "political" terms. While the structure of class relations was for Mao a feature of "economics", he portrayed the struggle between the classes as a "political" struggle in the broadest sense. Consequently, Mao could call for an adjustment of class struggle on the theoretical premise that such an historical

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

initiative would occur largely within the "political" realm of society anyway. This helps explain why Mao perceived the possibility of an adjustment of class struggle while at the same time insisting that neither the classes nor the contradiction between them could be eliminated through "political" action alone. There were, therefore, definite limits to the historical effectivity of "politics", and the elimination of class struggle was not one of its prerogatives.

Whether such a theoretical position was a function of Mao's rather Leninist predilection for political activism is not only a moot question, but a largely irrelevant one. For the point remains that Mao had arrived (by whatever route) at a theoretical position which could inform his interpretation and explanation of the historical context within which he found himself. Moreover, by arguing a heightened causal role for "politics", and by suggesting that "politics" might perform a pivotal role in "concentrating" the ideas and activities of a class, Mao was anticipating by many years the theoretical shift of much neo-Marxist theory. One only has to reflect, for instance, on Nicos Poulantzas' assertions during the late 1960's and 1970's that the role of the political field of the state is to intervene in the class relations of production to ensure their constitution and reproduction,⁷⁸ to perceive that Mao had arrived at a rather similar position during the Yan'an period. And the point remains that Mao formulated this position, not through a lengthy process of closet cogitation, but in the teeth of a bloody and protracted armed conflagration. Perhaps for Mao, the supposed link between theory and practice was more than just an idle cliché.

78. Nicos Poulantzas, State, Power, Socialism (London: NLB, 1978), p. 17.

One of Mao's preoccupations during the Yan'an period had been with the type of "government system" (*zhengti*) which China should utilize during the period of New Democracy and in the future. To that end, Mao penned several lengthy and theoretically important documents concerning not only the structure of such a government, but also the historical role that it might perform. Mao perceived the government, as we have observed, as a feature of the "political" realm. A brief analysis of Mao's views on the role of government should therefore extend our comprehension of the causal effectivity he attributed to "politics" in social life.

We have already noted that Mao did not perceive a necessary coherence (in class terms) between the "state system" (*guoti*) and the "system of government", and he suggested that there was a possibility that the two systems could be "out of harmony" (*buxiang shiying*). This would indicate that Mao was prepared to allow a degree of freedom from strict class determination and thus a degree of causal effectivity to the government in terms of social and historical initiative. Decisions and actions taken by a government system in which the relative status of the various classes in society was not adequately reflected (that is, "out of harmony" with the "state system"),⁷⁹ would not appear amenable to immediate class explanation. An explanation of such governmental decisions and actions would also have to take into account the form and function of the governmental administration itself. Mao was aware that possible variation in administrative form and function existed even where the nature of the class structure remained relatively constant. For example, in 1942 and again in 1944, Mao called for a reform of the Communists' own administration with his

79. SW II, p. 352; XJ II, p. 638; Ji VII, p. 165.

slogan "better troops and simpler administration"; in doing so, Mao was indicating that the structure and performance of the administration would be an important ingredient for success at that particular juncture of the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance.⁸⁰ That Mao took the problems of administration seriously is evidenced by his lengthy analysis of 1942 entitled Economic and Financial Problems in the Anti-Japanese War.⁸¹ It becomes evident from this analysis that Mao accepted the possibility that governmental administration could be responsible for the success or failure of policies supposedly dictated by class interest; "In our economic and financial set-up", Mao declared, "we must overcome such evils as disunity, assertion of independence and lack of co-ordination, and must establish a working system which is unified and responsive to direction and which permits the full application of our policies and regulations".⁸²

Mao also believed that the government, as with the political party, had the capacity to "concentrate" the ideas and opinions of the masses.⁸³ In order for the government and its administration to perform this function successfully, there had to be "a correct line of organization".⁸⁴ Mao perceived the most appropriate line of organization as one in which the channels of communication between government and people remained open and which allowed a rapid and effective transmission of information in both directions. The

80. SW III, pp. 116, 177; XJ III, pp. 851, 905.

81. Ji VIII, pp. 183-354; a truncated version appears SW III, pp. 111-116; XJ III, pp. 846-851; a full translation appears in Andrew Watson (ed.), Mao Zedong and the Political Economy of the Border Region (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

82. SW III, p. 115; XJ III, pp. 850-1.

83. SW III, p. 87; XJ III, p. 823; Ji VIII, p. 135.

84. SW (1956) IV, p. 205.

organizational form of the government's administration could thus play an important role in determining the level of effectiveness of the communication channels, and thus of the ability of the government to match intention in policy formulation with the actual implementation of its policies.

Similarly, in an interview with James Bertram in 1937, Mao had declared that the effectiveness of a government in responding to the exigencies of war depended on its organizational structure. China could choose between one of two systems of government; democratic centralist or absolute centralist. In the original version of this interview, Mao had argued that the history of mankind's political activities indicated that democratic centralism was the best organizational form, and that in times of war such a system increased political and military effectiveness.⁸⁵ It is interesting that Mao perceived all government systems as being variations on a centralist theme, for during the Yan'an period Mao had advocated on several occasions a federal system of government to allow for the diversity of China's national minorities. This call for a federalist system was not, however, in contradiction with his belief in centralism, for his conception of federalism was premised on a strong central government over and above the federation's component political units. In a section from On Coalition Government (1945), Mao explained the principle on which this federal system would be organized:

The question of the state and political power within New Democracy includes the question of federation. All of the nationalities within the boundaries of China should, on the basis of voluntary and democratic principles, organize the Chinese Democratic Republican Federation; moreover, on the basis of this federation organize a federal central government.⁸⁶

85. Ji V, p. 299.

86. Ji IX, p. 220.

This passage, and all other references to a future federal government system for China, were subsequently deleted from the official version of Mao's Selected Works.⁸⁷ However, the problem of the appropriate degree of government centralism was to persist in Mao's thought beyond the Yan'an period, even though the notion of a federal system for China was officially scrapped; indeed, Mao came in the late 1950's to regard the degree of government centralism as being an important influence on the level of initiative of lower tiers of government as well as local productive enterprises.⁸⁸

Mao therefore was under no illusion as to the importance of government as an agent for the attainment of political and economic objectives. Its primary function was, of course, to provide the economic power of the ruling class(es) with an organizational form and to translate ruling class interests into policy. Mao did not, however, perceive a necessarily complete or automatic correlation between ruling class aspiration and the organizational form which the government assumed, or the policies it might pursue. Although the possibility for autonomous initiative by government was of course limited by the social context of which the class structure was the most important feature, the nature of government (in terms of structure, political outlook of its administrators, methods of policy implementation, and so on) had to be taken into consideration in attempting to provide an explanation for historical actions at a political or administrative level. Government was not merely a lifeless conduit through which ruling class aspirations could be processed unaffected by the nature of the processing medium itself. Rather, the

87. See also Ji IX, p. 231. For a list of Mao's references to federalism during the Yan'an period, see MP, p. xxxi.

88. See especially MTTU, pp. 68-73.

government could take an active role in "concentrating" and formalizing the aspirations of the dominant class(es) within society.

Here again is evidence of Mao's attribution of a significant causal role to an element of the "political" realm of society. It must be stressed, however, that in the On New Democracy formulation, government is portrayed as an integral element of the "basis" of society, and not as a superstructural "reflection" as had been the case in On Contradiction. Rather, elements of the "political" realm were a "concentrated expression of economics", and it is clear that Mao perceived such elements as being capable of actively "concentrating" the ideas and activities of a class or the masses. The act of "concentration" in this sense was a function of "politics" itself; "politics" thus occupied a crucial and pivotal role in the development of society. The success or failure of the "politics" of an economic class thus had more than a peripheral bearing on the future economic status of that class, and the performance of a class at a "political" level could not automatically be deduced from the economic status of the class within society. Mao was therefore attempting to arrive at a formulation in which there was a reciprocal causal relationship between "economics" and "politics", a relationship which would not admit of an iron-clad class determination of what transpired in the "political" realm of society. In so doing, Mao was clearly attempting to create a theoretical position which would not only allow (what Mao perceived as) an accurate interpretation of Chinese social reality, but which would also appear to remain within the more deterministic orthodoxy of Soviet Marxism. For by using a concept such as "basis", and by explaining the development of society by reference to developments within that "basis", the verisimilitude of orthodoxy could be

maintained. Moreover, by astutely employing, with whatever degree of accuracy, a Leninist reference to "politics" as the "concentrated expression of economics", Mao was not only able to incorporate "politics" within this "basis", but to add legitimacy to his position into the bargain.

Having explored the causal relationship within the "basis" of society, let us move on to an analysis of the position of "culture" within the tripartite theoretical conceptualization portrayed and utilized by Mao in On New Democracy. According to Mao, it is the combination of "economics" and "politics" as society's "basis" which represents the causal matrix from which "culture" emerges; "the old politics and economics of the Chinese nation form the basis of its old culture, just as its new politics and economics will form the basis of its new culture".⁸⁹ Elsewhere in On New Democracy, Mao asserts that a "given culture is the ideological reflection (*guannianxingtai de fanying*) of the politics and economics of a given society".⁹⁰ However, although "culture" is a "reflection" of the "basis" of society, it can once formed begin to exert a "tremendous influence" upon the "basis". As Mao points out:

It follows that the form of culture is first determined by the political and economic form, and only then (*ranhou*) does it influence the given political and economic form.⁹¹

Although "culture" is originally "determined" (*jueding*) by the "basis", the emergence of such a "culture" capable of exerting a "tremendous influence" on the "basis" of society raises the possibility that dominance in causation might pass from the "basis" to its engendered

89. SW II, p. 341; XJ II, p. 625; Ji VII, p. 150.

90. SW II, p. 369; XJ II, p. 655; Ji VII, p. 187.

91. SW II, p. 340; XJ II, p. 624; Ji VII, p. 149.

"culture" once this had been produced. That Mao did not perceive this to be the case can be demonstrated by an exploration of three concepts which figure in On New Democracy; the concept of "reflection", the concept of "culture" being in the service of its "basis", and the concept of a differentiated "basis".

Mao declared "culture" to be a "reflection" of society's "politics" and "economics". Yet, if "culture" is such a "reflection", how could it be capable of exerting a "tremendous influence" on the elements of the "basis" which had produced it? The concept of "reflection" suggests a less substantial image of something else, the image having no autonomous existence in the absence of the original. There can be no doubt, however, that Mao perceived "culture" as possessing a very real capacity to influence the rate of historical development. At the Yan'an Forum of 1942, for example, he argued that revolutionary art and literature could "help the masses to propel history forward".⁹²

Mao was constantly at pains, however, to emphasize that "culture" was a manifestation at an ideological level of a particular class position, and that he could not conceive of a supra-class culture:

In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics...Party work in literature and art occupies a definite and assigned position in Party revolutionary work as a whole and is subordinated to the revolutionary tasks set by the Party in a given revolutionary period. We do not favour overstressing the importance of literature and art, but neither do we favour underestimating their importance. Literature and art are subordinate to politics, but in their turn exert a great influence on politics. Revolutionary literature and art are

92. SW III, p. 82; XJ III, p. 818; Ji VIII, p. 128.

part of the whole revolutionary cause, they are cogs and wheels in it, and though in comparison with certain other and more important parts they may be less significant and less urgent and may occupy a secondary position, nevertheless, they are indispensable cogs and wheels in the whole machine... when we say that literature and art are subordinate to politics, we mean class politics...⁹³

Several interesting points emerge from this passage which have a bearing on this concept of "reflection". Firstly, it is most instructive that Mao repeatedly emphasizes that "culture" is "subordinate" (*cóngshǔ*) to "politics"; and, moreover, that "politics" is "class politics". The subordination of "culture" to "politics" indicates that "culture" is susceptible to the organizing and directing influence of "politics"; as Mao declared, "all culture (is)...geared to definite political lines". While the emergence and production of "culture" might be a function of a class, the actual organization of "culture" was largely a prerogative of "politics", "politics" thus standing in an intermediate position between the economic classes and the "culture" of those classes. Consequently, while the historical function of "politics" was the "concentration" of the "scattered and unsystematic" ideas and activities of a class or the masses, it also had the function of organizing "culture". The "reflection" of "culture" was not, therefore, a completely automatic process; rather, in Mao's usage, the notion of "reflection" implied an active intervention by "politics" in order to allow the systematization of the "culture" of a class so that it could be of service to a certain "political line".

Secondly, by insisting that "all culture...belong(s) to definite classes", Mao was indicating that the possible thresholds of a "culture" are established, and the variability of the content of that "culture"

93. SW III, p. 86; XJ III, p. 822, JI VIII, p. 134; emphasis added.

constrained within certain limits by the nature of the class from which it had emerged. It would be inconceivable, for example, that the "culture" of the landlord class might perceive or portray the peasantry in a favourable light. In a letter written to the Yan'an Opera Company after viewing its production of "Compelled to Climb Mount Liang" (*Bi shang Liang shan*), Mao commented on the unfavourable characterizations of the common people in the "culture" of feudal China:

History is created by the people, but in the old stage-plays (in all old literature and art which was divorced from the people), with the old master and his lady, and the young master and miss, ruling the stage, the people became the dregs, and thus history was turned upside down. Now you have turned it the right way up again, restored history's appearance (*mi'anmu*), and opened new and unfamiliar aspects from these old plays, for which I offer well-earned congratulations.⁹⁴

Not only is the relationship between class and "culture" made clear in this letter, but also the possibility of a "political" intervention to organize and systematize "culture" in the interests of a particular class or classes. Thus, the notion of "reflection" implies a clear class influence on the nature of "culture", although the systematized and organized "culture" of a class, that which can effectively serve the interests of its class, is a function of the organizing influence of "politics".

As well as "culture" being a "reflection" in this sense, Mao also asserted that "culture" could function in the service of its "basis"; "the new culture reflects these new economic and political forces in the field of ideology (*zai guannianxingtai shang*) and serves

94. Ji IX, p. 95; an alternate translation of this letter appears in PR No. 23 (2 June) 1967, p. 5; see also MP, pp. 77-8.

them".⁹⁵ This perception of "culture" as serving its "basis" is closely related to Mao's belief that "culture" could be organized by "politics" so that it could effectively pursue and promote class interests. Here again, there is the suggestion that "culture" could play a role in facilitating or retarding social change, but being subordinate to "politics", "culture" was not attributed by Mao with the capacity to initiate such change autonomously.

The role of "culture" in serving its "basis" can be more clearly delineated by reference to the differentiation of the "basis" of society. Although Mao referred to society's "basis", it is important to note that he did not perceive this social category as an undifferentiated entity. Not only did Mao believe it to be differentiated horizontally (that is, as a result of its division into an "economic" and "political" realm), it was also characterized by vertical cleavages which divided and separated the competing modes of production in an economically heterogeneous society. Mao was under no illusion as to the fragmented nature of Chinese society, and he frequently referred to it as being of a "colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal" nature. China was untypical of any one mode of production, its social "basis" being a differentiated mixture of several coexisting and competing politico-economic formations and relationships. It is consequently no coincidence that the model of society abstracted by Mao from the Chinese experience should also give evidence of this vertical differentiation. If the social category of the "basis" presumed such vertical differentiation, then it follows that "culture", which is a "reflection" of this "basis", would also be a differentiated social category, its cleavages mirroring divisions in the "basis". A

95. SW II, p. 370; XJ II, pp. 655-6; Ji VII, p. 188.

semi-feudal and semi-colonial "basis" would thus give rise to a semi-feudal and semi-colonial "culture"; the "new culture" advocated by Mao would be a "reflection" of the "new economic and political forces" within Chinese society.⁹⁶ This notion of differentiation is clearly articulated by Mao in the following passage from On New Democracy:

A national culture with a socialist content will necessarily be the reflection of a socialist politics and economy. There are socialist elements (*yinsu*) in our politics and our economy, and hence these socialist elements are reflected in our national culture; but taking our society as a whole, we do not have a socialist politics and a socialist economy yet, so that there cannot be a wholly socialist national culture.⁹⁷

If the social "basis" is differentiated and gives rise to a differentiated "culture", how do the various elements of this differentiated "culture" interact, and what is the nature and degree of their influence? As we have noted, the emergence of a "culture" is governed by developments within the "basis", including the role of "politics" in organizing "culture". Mao was to indicate changes within China's "basis" as being responsible for the appearance and growth of the "new culture"; "without the capitalist economy, without the political forces of these classes, the new ideology or new culture could not have emerged".⁹⁸ It would thus seem logical that this newly-emergent "culture" would serve its own "basis", rather than the "basis" of society generally. Similarly, a semi-feudal "culture" would reinforce and assist the semi-feudal politico-economic formation from which it had emerged.

If a "culture" exists to serve its own "basis", what might its

96. Ibid.

97. SW II, p. 379; XJ II, p. 665; Ji VII, p. 200.

98. SW II, p. 370; XJ II, pp. 655-6; Ji VII, p. 188.

relationship be to a "basis" not its own?; for example, how would the "new culture" influence or react with a semi-feudal "basis"? Although Mao believed that China's feudal, semi-feudal and semi-colonial politics and economics were still (1940) "dominant" (*tongzhi*) within Chinese society, there can be no doubt from the stress that he placed on the role of revolutionary "culture" that he perceived it as performing a potentially significant role in the process of decline of these "dominant" politico-economic formations.⁹⁹ "Culture" could not independently initiate that process, its generation coming from within the "basis" itself. Once set in motion, however, "culture" could significantly accelerate that process, and by so doing, "propel history forward".¹⁰⁰ What emerges here is that a newly-emergent and historically-progressive "culture" could have a "tremendous influence" most obviously on a declining or degenerating section of the social "basis" which it did not reflect. At the same time, such a "culture" would reinforce (that is, it serves) the "basis" from which it was engendered. By so reinforcing its "basis", "culture" could accelerate the development of that "basis"; "the culture of new democracy is on the one hand a reflection of that social form, while on the other hand it gives impetus to the continued progress of that social form".¹⁰¹ Mao therefore perceived "culture" as playing a dual role; serving its own "basis", while assisting in the debilitation of any "basis" in contention with its own.

The historical role of "culture" is somewhat clouded, however, if we turn our attention to the relationship between competing cultures within a differentiated society. Although "culture" was

99. SW II, p. 341; XJ II, p. 625; Ji VII, p. 150.

100. SW III, p. 82; XJ III, p. 818; Ji VIII, p. 128.

101. Ji IX, p. 134.

perceived by Mao as reflecting its own "basis", he also referred to the possibility that a newly-emergent "culture" could "develop out" of a previously established "culture", there being a seeming continuity in cultural development.¹⁰² In On the New Stage (1938), Mao had warned his comrades against ignoring China's cultural heritage:

Contemporary China has grown out of the China of the past; we are Marxist in our historical approach (*lishizhuyizhe*) and must not lop off our history. We should sum up our history from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen and take over this valuable legacy.¹⁰³

Mao was to repeat this warning in On New Democracy, here again stressing the continuity of cultural development; "China's...present new culture, too, has developed out of her old culture; therefore we must respect our own history and must not lop it off".¹⁰⁴

This assertion that one "culture" could "develop out" of another, places in question the notion that a "culture" can only be a "reflection" of its own "basis". The concept of cultural continuity stressed in the two passages quoted above would seem to suggest that a newly-emergent "culture" could be signally influenced not only by its "basis", but also by already existing cultural forms. How is this seeming paradox to be resolved?

Firstly, it must be remembered that developments within the "basis" are antecedent (both causally and temporally) to developments within the "cultural" realm. Before there could be a new "culture",

102. SW II, p. 381; XJ II, p. 667; Ji VII, p. 202.

103. SW II, p. 209; XJ II, p. 499; Ji VI, pp. 260-1; cf. the translation in PTMTT, p. 172.

104. SW II, p. 381; XJ II, p. 667; Ji VII, p. 202.

a new "basis" must have emerged. This new "basis" could not emerge spontaneously, and relied for its generation on changes and transformations within the old "basis". As Mao pointed out, "China's present new politics and economics have developed out of her old politics and old economy...".¹⁰⁵ The process of emergence of a new "basis" was, in the Chinese experience, of a protracted nature, and Mao obviously perceived the old and the new in a dynamic state of coexistence and competition. Because the new "basis" had emerged from the old, the new (while qualitatively different) could not but be influenced and constrained by the form and function of the old. The "culture" which emerged from the new "basis" would thus bear the imprint of this influence from the old "basis", the new "basis" standing in an intermediate position between the two. In this way, the new "culture" would receive many of the same influences as the old "culture", although indirectly and once removed from the original source of that influence.

Secondly, the old "culture" was itself far from being a homogeneous category, and was characterized by differentiation along class lines. The positive manner in which Mao referred to China's cultural heritage would lead to the expectation that he perceived in this heritage progressive elements which stood in contrast to the dominant feudal "culture". This indeed was the case:

A splendid old culture was created during a long period of Chinese feudal society. To study the development of this old culture, to reject its feudal dross and assimilate its democratic essence is a necessary condition for developing our new national culture...It is imperative to separate the fine old culture of the people which had a more or less democratic and

105. Ibid.

revolutionary character from all the decadence
of the old feudal ruling class.¹⁰⁶

It is evident that Mao perceived certain features of the old "culture" (that of the common people) as being sufficiently progressive to be compatible with the new "culture", and it is certain that he believed that this compatibility was sufficient to permit the survival of such cultural elements even though there had been marked changes in the "basis" of society. This did not mean, however, that such progressive cultural elements from the old "culture" would necessarily survive without a conscious intervention on the part of the "politics" of the new "basis"; that is, in the form of "political" action to salvage, organize and promote old cultural elements deemed to have utility for the new "basis" and the "culture" it was producing. To a certain extent, therefore, the continuity of "culture" was susceptible to "political" action, the manner in which the old "culture" could influence the new, and the way in which the new could "develop out" of the old, being amenable to "political" direction.

The centrality of "politics" in synthesizing and organizing the "culture" of a class was due, in Mao's mind, to the "scattered and unsystematic" way in which the ideas and attitudes emerged in unmediated form from a class. Mao was very sensitive to the fact that a wide variety of such ideas and attitudes appeared to exist amongst members of the same class. Although shared socio-economic factors might serve to establish a class modality for such ideas and attitudes, the range within which such ideas and attitudes might exist could be extensive. There was thus no assumption of a coherent and systematized class "culture" (or ideology) separate from the influence of "politics".

106. Ibid.

Indeed, Mao made it quite clear that there could be numerous ideas and attitudes (in short, ideologies) which could characterize the thinking of members of a class; "So long as classes exist, there will be as many doctrines as there are classes, and even various groups (*jitian*) in the same class may have their different doctrines (*zhuyi*).¹⁰⁷

Mao's perception of a potentially extensive range within which ideas and attitudes might exist amongst members of a class, lessens the likelihood that he perceived class boundaries as being a rigid socially-determined barrier which precluded changes in ideology. For not all peasants held the same beliefs or thought in the same way; neither did members of the working class. The production of a systematized "culture" or ideology was a function of the "politics" of a given class, and there could be no easy assumption that all members of that class would necessarily sympathize with or subscribe to such a "culture".

The possibility that a wide variety of ideas and attitudes could emerge within a class, and the social causes of this intra-class variety in ideology, are made evident if we turn our attention to Mao's utilization of the concept of "stratum" (*jieceng*) during the Yan'an period. It appears that Mao's pre-occupation with disclosing the particularities of specific historical contexts led to his conclusion that the concept of class might not be sufficiently precise for the delineation of their constituent social contours. Consequently, Mao felt compelled to dissect a class in order to determine more exactly the causes of its behaviour. The concept of "stratum" as an identifiable grouping within a class thus gained in importance in his thought; and the corollary of this position was, of course, the lessened emphasis

107. SW II, pp. 363-4; XJ II, p. 648; Ji VII, p. 178.

on the undifferentiated or socially homogeneous character of a class.

Mao had shown his propensity to divide a class into its constituent strata as early as 1926 with his first serious attempt to apply a class analysis to Chinese society.¹⁰⁸ Again, in his analysis of the classes in China's rural areas (written in 1933), Mao was to demonstrate an obvious sensitivity to the differentiation existing within classes.¹⁰⁹ During the Yan'an period, his most comprehensive analysis of China's classes appears in The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party (1939), in which he widely utilized the concept of "stratum" to facilitate analysis of intra-class differentiation. From the examples offered in this document, it is possible to gain an appreciation of what constituted a "stratum". The "city poor" (*chengshi pinmin*) were classified by Mao as a "stratum", and it is interesting to note that Mao further sub-divided this "stratum" into bankrupt handicraftsmen, small traders, peasants in search of work, and coolie labourers who rely on uncertain work; this "stratum", part of the petty-bourgeoisie class, was designated by Mao a "semi-proletariat" (*ban wuchanjieji*).¹¹⁰ Small traders are a "stratum", divided into an upper and lower stratum, the distinction arising from whether the small trader exploited the labour of others or not.¹¹¹ Vagrants (*yumin*) are categorized as an "unstable social stratum", and included rural and urban unemployed, robbers, gangsters, beggars, prostitutes, and people

108. SW I, pp. 13-21; XJ I, pp. 3-11; Ji I, pp. 161-174. For an annotated translation of the original document showing a table giving graphic evidence of Mao's employment of the concept of "stratum" in social analysis, see M. Henri Day, *Op. cit.*, pp. 292-302. For an analysis of Mao's position on China's social classes at this time, see Stuart R. Schram, "Mao Zedong and the Role of Various Classes...", *Op. cit.*, pp. 227-239.

109. SW I, pp. 137-9; XJ I, pp. 113-5.

110. Ji VII, p. 122.

111. Ji VII, p. 124.

engaged in superstitious practices.¹¹² In another document of 1941, Mao applied the concept of "stratum" to landlords, rich peasants, merchants, middle peasants, poor peasants, tenant farmers, handicraftsmen, and vagrants.¹¹³ Similarly, capitalists,¹¹⁴ big landlords, bankers and compradores are referred to in various sources as "strata".¹¹⁵

From these examples of Mao's usage of the concept "stratum", the following observations can be made. Firstly, Mao clearly believed that the concept of class might not be sufficiently precise in delineating the particularities of society's economic relationships, and that a sensitivity to intra-class cleavages was necessary in order to gain a comprehensive and accurate analysis. The same could hold true for the concept of "stratum" itself, which might require further sub-division into occupational categories, or categories of scale (for example, small traders large enough to exploit the labour of others). Secondly, the strata that constitute a class derive their distinguishing characteristics from economic factors; for example, handicraftsmen and small tradesmen, while both belonging to the petty-bourgeoisie, were distinguished from each other by the factors that characterized their separate economic niches. Thirdly, the various strata within a class possessed sufficient characteristics in common to constitute an identifiable class; such shared characteristics derived, according to Mao, from family origin, living conditions and political outlook.¹¹⁶ Fourthly, Mao indicated that the concept of "stratum" could be fruitfully

112. SW II, pp. 325-6; XJ II, p. 609; Ji VII, p. 127.

113. Ji VIII, p. 18.

114. Ji VIII, p. 13.

115. SW III, p. 221; XJ III, p. 948; Ji IX, p. 207.

116. SW II, p. 322; XJ II, p. 604; Ji VII, p. 121; note that these criteria were added on the republication of this article in the post-Liberation Selected Works. However, they are in the spirit of Mao's Yan'an position and have been utilized here.

employed in ascertaining the economic origin of political power and political institutions. For example, in his analysis of the Guomindang, Mao observed that "the Kuomintang is not a homogeneous political party. Though it is controlled and led by the reactionary clique representing the stratum of the big landlords, bankers and compradores, it must not be entirely identified with this clique".¹¹⁷

At the very least, it appears obvious that Mao perceived in the differentiation of a class into numerous strata, a socially-based explanation for the varied ideas and attitudes which characterized class "culture" or ideology unmediated by "political" systematization and organization. It also suggests a possible explanation for Mao's seeming willingness to accept a flexible interpretation of the orthodox Marxist doctrine of the class-determined nature of ideology. For although ideas and attitudes were still a function of social and economic conditions, there could exist a wide variety of such conditions characterizing the existence of members of a class. That wide variety of social and economic conditions could give rise to "scattered and unsystematic" ideas and attitudes at some distance from the modality characteristic of the ideology of that class. Moreover, these "scattered and unsystematic" ideas were subject to the influence of "politics", itself an integral part of the "basis" of society. "Politics" could, through systematization, organization and promotion of the "culture" (and ideology) of a class, elicit a movement in thought on the part of individuals within that class, and in specific historical situations, in other classes as well. The cause of movements in thought and ideology thus derived from the causal "basis" of society, and were not perceived by Mao as a superstructural transformation in

117. SW III, p. 221; XJ III, p. 948; Ji IX, p. 207.

autonomy from society's "basis".

The orthodoxy of Mao's approach to class and ideology has been frequently questioned in secondary critiques of his thought. The interpretation offered here dispels the notion that Mao (during the Yan'an period at least) had cut himself adrift from the basic Marxist doctrine that thought and ideology are largely a function of social and economic conditions. Rather than abandoning that position, Mao had attempted to refine it through the incorporation of a sensitivity to intra-class divisions, and through the elaboration of a theoretical formulation which perceived "politics" as part of society's "basis", and causally responsible for the systematization and promotion of "culture" and ideology. While it could be argued that this position is not greatly removed from Stalin's attribution of a rigidly homogeneous culture or ideology to an economic class, the point remains that Mao had arrived at this position through a sensitivity to and appreciation of the variability which could characterize an economic class, something Stalin appeared blind to. Once again, however, it would seem that Mao was attempting, within the constraints of Soviet Marxism, to formulate a theoretical position which would allow an incorporation of the specificities of the "historically particular situations" which so preoccupied him.

In conclusion, Mao's formulation of a tripartite schema for the interpretation of social reality which incorporated "politics" within the "basis" of society, allowed him to reject any Menshevizing appeals to the underdeveloped condition of China's economic base, and move forward to a resolute application of "politics" to achieve revolutionary goals. For by locating "politics" within the "basis", Mao could lay claim to a theoretical legitimacy for his position,

while allowing himself at the same time a degree of flexibility in action which a strict reading of Soviet Marxism may have precluded.

Mao's propensity to place an individual stamp on his reading of orthodox Marxism is also clearly in evidence in his interpretation of historical time and the future, to an analysis of which we now turn.

II. Historical Time and the Future

There is actually little attention in Mao's Yan'an writings to philosophical problems of the nature of time. However, in his Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism (c. 1937), Mao did devote a short section to a discussion of time and space in which he incorporated time within the framework of his materialist ontology, arguing that time has an objective existence independent of man's consciousness of it:

Movement is a form of the existence of matter; space and time are also forms of the existence of matter. The movement of matter exists in time and space, and moreover the movement of matter itself is the premise for these two forms of material existence, time and space. Space and time cannot be separated from matter...Space and time are not independent or non-material things, and are not subjective forms of our consciousness; they are forms of existence of the objective material world. They do not exist objectively outside of matter and matter does not exist outside of them.¹¹⁸

However, Mao makes no effort here to do any more than assert the correctness of his materialist position on time, offering virtually no evidence to support his view. Neither is there any evidence to suggest that Mao seriously attempted to relate this materialist

118. Ji VI, p. 289.

conception of time to the broad periods which he perceived in history, or to the notion of an historical future encompassing certain assumed attributes. In fact, this short philosophical treatment of time in Mao's Lecture Notes leaves the impression that it is the handiwork of a dilettante felt obliged to dabble in unfamiliar waters for the sake of propriety.

Of more interest are Mao's perspectives on historical periodization and time which emerged during the Yan'an period. When we turn our attention to the periodization employed at this time, it becomes evident that Mao was utilizing not one, but two systems by which to evaluate the flow of time and by which to dissect it into temporally discrete periods. In the first of these, what might be called an adaptation of the Gong yang periodization of history, Mao invoked a tripartite division of history and utilized (as had He Xiu) peace as the determining criterion for establishing the boundaries of historical periods. In the second, Mao by and large utilized a conventional Marxist periodization which perceived a progression in history from a primitive society of the distant past to a communist society in the future. It was, in short, the five-stage periodization of history which had become orthodoxy under Lenin and Stalin. This conventional Marxist periodization was, however, to require some adaptation at Mao's hands to cope with the ambiguities of the capitalist phase in the Chinese context. Nevertheless, such adaptation was in no way an attempt to dramatically supplant or alter a periodization which Mao appears to have accepted implicitly as the orthodox Marxist position. In this periodization, ownership of the means of production appears (except perhaps for the period described by Mao as the "bourgeois-democratic revolution") to have constituted

the principal criterion for discriminating one form of society from another, and thus for establishing temporal boundaries.

As one would expect, the employment of two forms of periodization could lead to difficulties in harmonizing temporal divisions based on appeals to differing criteria. It will become evident, however, that Mao did not appear to apprehend any tension between these two temporal frameworks, and that he merely superimposed the orthodox Marxist periodization over the Chinese tripartite system which he appeared to have favoured during the Yan'an period. Before turning to a more detailed examination of the texts to determine the manner in which Mao employed these two temporal frameworks, it is worth noting in passing that an alternative historical periodization within the Chinese tradition, namely the dynastic sequence, finds virtually no serious application within Mao's thinking during this period, and it is clear that the criteria by which he apprehended and divided the flow of historical time did not incorporate as significant changes in the ruling dynasty.

In a section of Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War (1936) largely expurgated from the official text, Mao distinguished three epochs (*shidai*) in man's history:

The life of mankind is made up of three great epochs--an epoch in which mankind lived in peace, an epoch in which mankind lived at war, and another epoch in which mankind lives in peace. We are at present at the dividing line (*jiaodian*) between the second and third epochs. Mankind's era of wars will be brought to an end by our own efforts, and beyond doubt the war we wage is part of the final battle.¹¹⁹

Mao was to repeat his division of human history into three epochs

119. Ji V, p. 88; cf. SW I, p. 182; XJ I, p. 158.

in On Protracted War (1938), and also to insist on the imminence of the third epoch of "perpetual peace". Once again, most of this passage has been deleted from the official text:

The protracted nature of China's Anti-Japanese War is inseparably connected with the fight for perpetual peace (*yongjiu heping*) in China and the whole world. Never has there been an historical period such as the present in which war is so close to perpetual peace. The life of humanity over the last several hundreds of thousands of years has already passed through two epochs: the epoch of the peaceful life of humanity and the epoch of the warlike life of humanity.¹²⁰

In contradistinction to He Xiu, Mao did not perceive in his theory of the "three epochs" a continued improvement in society as it progressed from the first through to the third epoch. Rather, the movement from the first to the second epoch in Mao's theory was to witness a dramatic alteration in the nature of society in which peace, formerly the dominant characterizing feature, gave way to war. It would seem evident that Mao did not consider this transition to represent a progress in history. To the contrary, there is the suggestion that this transition from the epoch of peace was to witness something of a deterioration in human history as mankind entered a deep and lengthy trough in which the dominant theme was war. This perception of historical time can be depicted diagrammatically as follows in Figure 4.

In On Protracted War, Mao was to invoke the Marxist framework in order to explain this sudden degeneration from the first epoch of peace to the second epoch of war. In this article, Mao identified the first epoch of peace with the first stage in the Marxist periodization, namely primitive society. In this first epoch, which had extended

120. Ji VI, p. 93; PTMT, pp. 391-3; cf. SW II, pp. 148-9; XJ II, pp. 442-3.

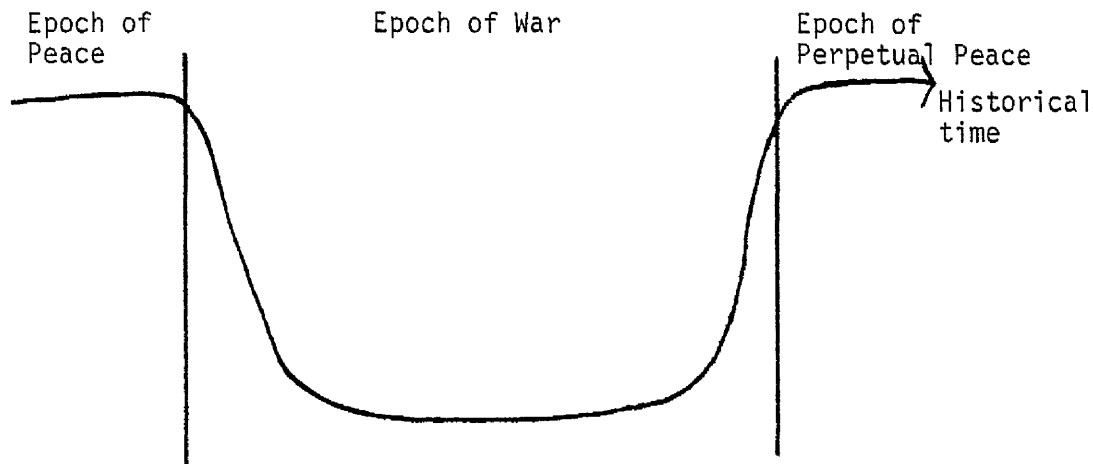


FIGURE 4: The Three Epochs in History

over several hundred thousand years, man had lived in a primitive clan society which was both classless and communist.¹²¹ The only war waged during this epoch was "against nature", and this because the level of production was "highly inadequate". Because this society was classless, an all-inclusive "love of humanity" (*renlei zhi ai*) was possible.¹²² However, precipitated by the development of the forces of production and the appearance of social divisions, this primitive communist society was to collapse some 5,000 years ago,¹²³ and mankind was forced to enter the second epoch of human history in which life was characterized by war.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, Mao did not expand on those factors at work within primitive society which might have given rise to such developments of the productive forces and the consequent appearance of social divisions. It would appear, however,

121. Ji VI, p. 93; PTMTT, p. 391; see also Ji VII, p. 98; SW II, p. 306; XJ II, p. 585.

122. Ji VIII, p. 140; SW III, p. 91; XJ III, p. 827.

123. Ji VII, p. 98; SW II, p. 306; XJ II, p. 585; note that in the official version, this figure has been changed to 4,000 years.

124. Ji VI, p. 95; PTMTT, p. 391.

from the rather cursory and schematic manner in which Mao described this transition, that he regarded it as being fairly sudden, and dramatic in its consequent transformation of a peaceful society to one characterized by war.

While the first epoch of peace was for Mao coterminous with primitive society, the second epoch of war encompassed several stages of the Marxist periodization. In China, the first of these was a slave society. However, following the transition from a slave to a feudal society during the Zhou dynasty (1122-249 B.C.), Chinese society "came to a standstill" (*tingdun qilai*).¹²⁵ During this feudal period, which was to extend for some 3,000 years, development in China's economy, politics and culture remained "sluggish" (*chihuan*) or ceased altogether (*tingzhi*).¹²⁶ The reason for this sluggish or negligible development was "the extreme poverty and backwardness of the peasants resulting from ruthless landlord exploitation and oppression".¹²⁷ Although China's socio-economic development was arrested by such exploitation and oppression, there were numerous peasant uprisings and rebellions, many of which had the effect of toppling existing dynasties; the dynasties established in their stead did not, however, constitute viable alternatives to the existing socio-economic system, and feudal rule continued. It would thus seem that it was the continuance of feudal rule which caused Mao to disregard the dynastic sequence or cycle as a possible periodization by which to evaluate historical time in the Chinese case; for feudalism in China persisted throughout numerous dynasties, this dominant characteristic of society remaining constant while dynasties had come and gone. Thus, while Mao did refer

125. Ji VII, p. 100.

126. Ibid.

127. Ji VII, p. 100; SW II, p. 308; XJ II, p. 588.

on occasion to the various dynasties in Chinese history, it was only in terms of historical reference, rather than as part of a temporal framework which employed the rise and fall of dynasties as its point of departure. Nevertheless, the peasant uprisings which had served to topple dynasties were perceived by Mao as constituting "the real motive force of historical evolution (*jinhua*) in Chinese feudal society".¹²⁸ The general impression of feudal society given by Mao is, however, of a long period of stagnation in Chinese history during which radical alternatives had not appeared intrinsically due to the absence of new forces and relations of production, and the absence of new political parties.¹²⁹ This long period of feudal stagnation in Chinese history also probably reinforced Mao's inclination to perceive the history of class society, rather than as witnessing an advance or progression through a series of modes of production, as a long trough in which no substantial development occurred and in which the dominant theme was war.

In the original text of The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party (1939), there is no indication that feudal stagnation held within it the embryo of an alternative mode of production destined eventually to supersede it. Rather, the intervention of capitalism in the form of Western imperialism during the Qing dynasty is attributed with initiating the changes that culminated in the disintegration of the traditional feudal economy. As Stuart Schram has pointed out, Mao was subsequently to reconsider his position on the lack of intrinsically spontaneous development in China's feudal economy,¹³⁰ and the following

128. Ji VII, p. 102; SW II, p. 308; XJ II, p. 588.

129. Ibid.

130. PTMTT, p. 114.

sentence was added to the post-Liberation text of this document; "As China's feudal society had developed a commodity economy, and so carried within itself the seeds (*mengya*) of capitalism, China would of herself have developed slowly into a capitalist society even without the impact of foreign capitalism".¹³¹ However, during the Yan'an period, it appears that Mao regarded the universalizing force of imperialism as instrumental in the subsequent transformation of Chinese society. This is born out by the fact that Mao dated the modern era in China from the first major incursions of Western imperialism in 1840.

In Mao's tripartite Chinese periodization of history, the entire modern era down to the Yan'an period was incorporated within the second epoch of war, and there obviously appeared to Mao numerous illustrations of the fact that war had remained since 1840 a dominant characterizing feature of Chinese society. In the Marxist periodization, however, the modern era presented Mao with something of a dilemma; not only was Chinese society not an industrialized capitalism, neither was it any longer a purely feudal society. In terms of social analysis, Mao had resolved this problem by abstracting a model which made allowance for competing and coexisting modes of production in a vertically differentiated society. Nevertheless, the feudal aspects of this society were still represented by Mao as the dominant economic and social forms of a society now characterized as "semi-feudal" and "semi-colonial". China's modern history since 1840 thus did not appear to facilitate an easy incorporation within the conventional Marxist periodization. China's society now incorporated elements of feudalism, capitalism and socialism, and was obviously a

131. SW II, p. 309; XJ II, p. 589.

heterogeneous society not readily classified according to socio-economic category. Mao resolved this problem by utilizing a Leninist category and incorporating the whole of modern Chinese history into what he termed the "bourgeois-democratic revolution". The basic characteristic of this "bourgeois-democratic revolution" was the struggle against imperialism and Chinese feudalism.

Within this period of the "bourgeois-democratic revolution", Mao perceived two distinct stages, with the May Fourth Movement of 1919 representing the historical watershed. Between 1840 and 1919, the revolution had been led by the bourgeoisie. During this stage of "Old Democracy", as Mao termed it, military struggles (such as the Taiping Rebellion, the Yi He Tuan, and the Revolution of 1911)¹³² were supplemented by battles on the cultural front, especially in education.¹³³ With the May Fourth Movement, leadership of the "bourgeois-democratic revolution" passed from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat and its vanguard party, the Chinese Communist Party. Mao perceived this distinction between the new and old stages of the "bourgeois-democratic revolution" as resulting from the changed domestic and international situation, especially the impact of the First World War with its ramifications within China, and the Russian Revolution of 1917. The forces unleashed by these events (and especially the emergence of the Chinese Communist Party) indicated quite different characteristics differentiating these two stages. As Mao was to point out in On New Democracy, "revolutions too can be classified into old and new, and what is new in one historical period becomes old in another. The century of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution can be divided into two main stages...Each has its basic historical characteristics".¹³⁴

132. Ji VII, p. 110; SW II, p. 314; XJ II, p. 595.

133. SW II, p. 371; XJ II, p. 657; Ji VII, pp. 190-1.

134. SW II, p. 370; XJ II, p. 656; Ji VII, p. 189.

It must be pointed out here that the basic criteria utilized to identify this period of the "bourgeois-democratic revolution" differ from those utilized to discern previous periods in the Marxist periodization. In these previous periods, ownership of the means of production appears to have been the dominant criterion. In the "bourgeois-democratic revolution", however, the confusing differentiation of ownership types appears to have led Mao to utilize the targets struggled against (imperialism and Chinese feudalism) as the key criterion by which to categorize this period. While the factor of ownership is certainly not absent from the analysis of the Yan'an period, it is clear that at the very least there was some loss of precision in the manner in which Mao utilized the criteria by which periods could be established in the Marxist time-scale, this loss of precision in no small measure a function of the fragmented type of society within which Mao mounted his analysis.

With the change of leadership following the May Fourth Movement of 1919, the "bourgeois-democratic revolution" entered the period of New Democracy. Mao's own involvement in the Chinese revolution had begun at this time, and he had at close quarters been able to witness the often dramatic shifts in fortune and party policy in the years since then. Consequently, the period of New Democracy since 1919 was itself the subject of historical dissection and periodization by Mao, and he divided it (in 1940) into four different stages. These stages, and their principal characterizing features and historical landmarks are summarized in Table 1.¹³⁵

While Mao divided the period of New Democracy into such small

135. SW II, pp. 373-8; XJ II, pp. 659-64; Ji VII, pp. 193-8; also SW II, pp. 288-95; XJ II, pp. 569-76; Ji VII, pp. 74-82.

Stage	Date	Distinctive Characterizing Features and Historical Landmarks
Stage 1	1919-21	May Fourth Movement; large-scale opposition to imperialism and feudalism; Emergence of intellectuals with communist sympathies, which paved the way for founding of Chinese Communist Party.
Stage 2	1921-27	Founding of Chinese Communist Party; First United Front with Guomindang (four class bloc); Sun Yat-sen formulates new Three People's Principles; First Great Revolution of 1924-27 including May 30th Movement, and Northern Expedition of 1926-27.
Stage 3	1927-36	Collapse of United Front; Guomindang goes over to reaction; period of civil war in which Party is rebuilt relying on peasantry and developing an independent armed force; establishment of Soviet base areas; Encirclement campaigns; Chinese Communist Party moves north (Long March) to resist Japanese imperialism.
Stage 4	1936-40	Return to United Front of four classes, but on broader social basis to resist Japanese imperialism. With fall of Wuhan, capitulation of big bourgeoisie represented by Wang Jingwei. Establishment and consolidation of Border Region administration; encouragement of guerilla war.

TABLE 1: Stages in the Period of New Democracy of the "Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution"

discrete stages, he remained convinced that all of these stages were an integral part of the world proletarian socialist revolution; this was a characteristic common to each stage. His inclination to establish such a discrete periodization in the New Democratic period was a function of his sensitivity to the need to formulate policies compatible with changed circumstances. He indicated through his periodization of New Democracy that conditions (the regularities characterizing the

Chinese revolution) could and did on occasion alter so dramatically that policies previously suitable had to be reformulated in the light of the new situation. A dramatic change in the constituent elements of an historical situation with the attendant shift in Party policy (such as the events of early 1927) was sufficient to indicate the end of one historical stage, and the emergence of another. Mao would not have regarded the periodization which he devised for China's New Democratic period as arbitrarily imposed, but as emerging from the historical facts which disclosed abrupt changes in the regularities defining the Chinese revolution. It is evident, however, that this periodization, taking as it does the fortunes of the Chinese Communist Party as its central criterion, owes significantly to the values and vantage-point employed by Mao in its formulation.

The need to establish the regularities defining each particular historical period or stage did, however, lead Mao to resist the tendency towards indiscriminate temporal transcendence so evident in much traditional Chinese historiography. Each historical period or stage possessed its own "special characteristics",¹³⁶ and it was these distinguishing regularities of a particular historical period which temporally separated one period or stage from another. "The China of today", Mao remarked in 1938, "cannot be compared with the China of any other historical period".¹³⁷

Mao's perception of the China of the Yan'an period, and his vision for its future, were characterized by an historical optimism at times becoming an eschatological certainty. In On the New Stage

136. Ji V, p. 87; SW II, p. 181; XJ II, p. 157.

137. Ji VI, p. 65; SW II, p. 125; XJ II, p. 419.

(1938), Mao argued that the Anti-Japanese War was being waged during the "most progressive period in the history of the Chinese nation", and that this constituted the most important basis for guaranteeing the eventual defeat of Japan.¹³⁸ Given the unpromising military situation at the time, Mao's optimism is somewhat surprising. Yet, this confidence of victory over Japan must be viewed as deriving at one level from Mao's general confidence in the predictive elements of Marxism as a theory of history, and on another level from a war-inspired eschatology which tended to fuel his faith in the imminent realization of the third epoch of perpetual peace. We have already observed that Mao perceived human society as poised on the "dividing line" (*jiaodian*) between the second epoch characterized by war and the third epoch of perpetual peace.¹³⁹ This certainty of imminent deliverance from the second epoch of war emerged also in Mao's important essay On Practice:

This process, the practice of changing the world, which is determined in accordance with scientific knowledge, has already reached a historic moment in the world and in China, a great moment unprecedented in human history, that is, the moment for completely banishing darkness from the world and from China and for changing the world into a world of light such as never previously existed.¹⁴⁰

The emergence of such strong eschatological themes within the Yan'an writings is without doubt in large part a function of the war situation itself. It is a characteristic of eschatological thought that it emerges during periods of social upheaval and the chaos resulting from war. Such chaos and upheaval are perceived as

138. Ji VI, p. 167.

139. Ji V, p. 88.

140. BZF II, p. 48; SW I, p. 308; XJ I, p. 272.

the penultimate historical scenario prior to the emergence of the millenium; the ultimate scenario is envisaged as chaos and upheaval to an even greater degree of intensity, and represents the final ordeal, the purifying flame, through which believers must pass before the new era can dawn. This eschatological belief in the intensification of violence prior to the realization of perpetual peace is evident in Mao's writings at this time. "Our war", Mao promised in 1936, "is the final one, but without doubt it will be the greatest and most brutal".¹⁴¹ In so promising an intensification of the violence of war followed by the dawning of an era of perpetual peace, Mao was providing himself and his adherents with an historical optimism held out as a future compensation for present sufferings, and which would lend impetus to the efforts needed to achieve the historical goals he raised.

The relationship between this eschatological impulse in Mao's thinking during the Yan'an period and his utilization of a periodization which incorporated a third epoch of peace becomes evident when the characteristics of this third epoch are explored. In the scattered references to this future (yet imminent) golden age, Mao appears to have drawn heavily from Chinese cultural elements to depict its characteristics. First and foremost amongst these characteristics was the category of peace. Man's future existence would be characterized by peace, and this peace would not be transitory, but perpetual. In On Protracted War (1938), Mao was to refer to this key characterizing feature in terms glowing with eschatological fervour:

When mankind has arrived at the epoch of perpetual peace, then there will be no more need of war. Neither armies, nor warships, nor military aircraft, nor poison

141. Ji V, p. 88.

gas will then be needed. At this moment will begin the third epoch in the history of humanity, the epoch of peaceful life during which there will never be war. Throughout all eternity (*yi wan si nian*) our sons and grandsons will never know war again.¹⁴²

Elsewhere in this same document, Mao was to stress that the attainment of this third epoch of peace was virtually at hand; "a new world of perpetual peace and brightness already lies clearly before us".¹⁴³ The centrality of peace in Mao's identification of this future era would appear (as was suggested in Chapter I) to be a reassertion of the traditional Chinese millenarian doctrine of *tai ping* (universal peace) as this had been equated with the third epoch by He Xiu's reinterpretation of the Gong Yang commentary. It is quite possible that the intellectual connection between these traditional elements and Mao's eschatological theory of the three epochs was the concept of a society based on *da tong* (great harmony) as this had been popularized by Kang Youwei. Kang had taken these traditional utopian elements and built them into a detailed vision of a utopian society in which harmony and peace were the most important features. There is a strong possibility that Mao was familiar with Kang's Da Tong Shu, and that Kang's utopianism represented the filter through which these traditional millenarian concepts reached Mao. This suggestion is reinforced by Mao's reference to *da tong* as describing the general goal of the communist movement. In response to a question by Agnes Smedley in 1937, Mao asserted that "Chinese Communists are internationalists; they advocate the world movement for great harmony (*da tong*)...only when China is independent and liberated will it be able to participate in the world movement for

142. PTMTT, pp. 392-3; Ji VI, p. 95; SW II, pp. 148-9; XJ II, pp. 442-3.

143. SW II, p. 150; XJ II, p. 444; Ji VI, p. 96.

great harmony".¹⁴⁴

It would thus appear that perpetual peace and harmony represented the main characterizing features of this third epoch in human history. Yet, Mao did not limit his characterizations of this third epoch to these features. However, the more detailed perspectives he raised were usually predicated on the Marxist premise of a classless society; that is, on a prior elimination of classes as the contingency for the realization of such attributes. The utilization of such a premise suggests two important aspects of Mao's view of historical time and the future. Firstly, it seems probable that in Mao's conception of the future there was some ill-resolved confusion between the temporal boundaries of this third epoch of peace and the stages of socialism and communism in the Marxist periodization. For, by suggesting that this third epoch was imminent, Mao could hardly have equated it completely with a truly communist society which he stressed in his more pragmatic moments to be at some remove from the China of the Yan'an period. Indeed, he was to suggest in On New Democracy that the attainment of socialism (not to mention communism) was a question of a "maximum programme" for the Chinese Communist Party, something to be achieved well in the future when the objective conditions predisposed the actualization of that programme.¹⁴⁵ Yet, Mao's references to the third epoch of peace are largely couched in terms which impatiently anticipate its imminent attainment, and which perceived the successful culmination of the Anti-Japanese War as representing the temporal boundary separating the second epoch of war from the third epoch of peace. Indeed, on one occasion Mao predicted that the convocation of

144. Ji V, p. 180.

145. SW II, p. 361; XJ II, p. 647; Ji VII, p. 177.

the United Nations in San Francisco on 25 April 1945 would be the "starting point for this peace".¹⁴⁶ Unfortunately, it is not possible to extricate these two strands of Mao's historical expectation and merely expose the contradiction; for the fact remains that these two time-scales were not discrete in Mao's thinking and one tended to overlay the other, blurring the fine temporal distinctions of which each separately was potentially capable. And the concatenating factor which linked these two timescales was Mao's insistence on the centrality of class as the one key feature to which could be attributed all of society's ills. The problems associated with this concatenation through the agency of class are obvious; Communist society, whose attributes were predicated on the prior elimination of classes, was not imminent; the third epoch of peace, many of whose attributes also were contingent on the prior elimination of classes, was imminent. The third epoch of peace thus seemingly incorporated both the socialist as well as the communist phases of the Marxist periodization. Such an implicit assumption obviously leads to confusion regarding the status and characteristics of socialist society, for it would tend to imply that socialist society itself was necessarily classless, something neither Marx nor Lenin had suggested. It is almost certainly the case, however, that Mao also did not believe that socialist society would be classless, and it is probably safer to regard this confusion as arising from the utilization of two periodizations of historical time whose temporal boundaries could not be adequately harmonized.

Secondly, by asserting the prior elimination of classes as the premise for the actualization of many of the attributes of both the third epoch of peace and the future communist society, Mao was

146. Ji IX, p. 186.

employing the same form of logical necessity utilized by Lenin to assert as "inevitable" the "withering away of the state" (and discussed in Chapter I above). Given the elimination of class divisions, the future society would be able to operate on the basis of principles made impossible within class society. This form of reasoning, linking the attainment of desired goals to the negation of the negative within existing society, allowed Mao to assert with absolute confidence that all of the deleterious features arising from the division of society into classes would disappear as those divisions and the hostility engendered by them disappeared.

Mao's general view of "utilitarianism" (*gonglizhuyi*) is a clear demonstration of this form of reasoning based on logical necessity. At the Yan'an Forum (1942), Mao deferred to utilitarianism as "transcending" (*chao*) all other (ideological ?) considerations, but within class society utilitarianism remained the prerogative of this or that class rather than being for the benefit of the people as a whole.¹⁴⁷ One assumes, therefore, that Mao would regard true utilitarianism as feasible given the elimination of class divisions. This assumption is provided substance if we turn to a letter written by Mao to Peng Dehuai in May 1943. In this letter, Mao criticized Peng's "Talk on Democratic Education" (of March 1943) in which Peng had raised the Confucian axiom (Analects XV, 23) "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others" (*ji suo bu yu, wu shi yu ren*) as a political slogan. Mao did not equivocate in his criticism, for this Confucian form of utilitarianism was inappropriate given the continued existence of classes:

147. SW III, p. 85; XJ III, p. 821; Ji VIII, pp. 132-3.

It is inappropriate to put forward the slogan in politics "what you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others"; the present task is to employ war and other political means to overthrow the enemy. The present social base is a commodity economy. Both of these are so-called "what you do not want done to yourself must be done to others". Only after classes have been eliminated can the principle "what you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others" be implemented; then war, political oppression and economic exploitation will be eliminated.¹⁴⁸

Thus, while class divisions remained, utilitarian considerations at both a societal and personal level were necessarily subordinate to class interests. As a result, Mao urged the employment of the opposing principle in order to create a society in which the realization of true (that is, classless) utilitarianism was possible; "...the policy of our Party", asserted Mao in 1941 quoting Zhu Xi, "is to "do unto them as they do unto us", stick for stick and carrot for carrot".¹⁴⁹

A related feature of the future society also perceived by Mao as contingent on the elimination of classes was an "all-inclusive love of humanity". At the Yan'an Forum, Mao was to blame the division of society into classes for having made such a principle inoperable:

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148. Ji IX, pp. 13-4. I have followed Legge's translation of the Confucian axiom; see James Legge, The Four Books (Hong Kong Wei Tung Book Store, 1973), p. 138. According to Red Guard sources released during the Cultural Revolution, Peng Dehuai subsequently rejected Mao's critique of his talk. For the history of this polemic, and an alternate translation of Mao's critique, see CLG I:4, pp. 7-9. Subsequent to the Lushan Plenum of 1959, Mao was to refer to the Confucian axiom raised by Peng in 1943 as belonging to activities during the Anti-Japanese War "tending to sow discord"; see MTTU, p. 146; CLG I:4, p. 80; Wansui (1969), p. 312. See also SW V, p. 119, where Mao refers to the "policy of benevolence" raised by some "leading cadres" (although in this case, he identifies the date as being 1941).
149. SW II, p. 464; XJ II, p. 740. Mao was to repeat Zhu Xi's maxim in On the People's Democratic Dictatorship (1949). In this article Mao stated: "Chu Hsi, a philosopher from the Sung Dynasty, wrote many books and made many remarks which are now forgotten, but one remark is still remembered, 'Deal with a man as he deals with you'. This is just what we do". SW IV, p. 420; XJ IV, p. 1367.

As for the so-called love of humanity, there has been no such all-inclusive (*tongyi*) love since humanity was divided into classes...There will be genuine love of humanity, and that will be after classes are eliminated all over the world. Classes have split society; there will be love of all humanity when classes are eliminated and when society is reunited (*fugui yu tongyi*); but not now.¹⁵⁰

As one would expect in a society in which an all-inclusive love of humanity prevailed, the future communist society in an epoch of perpetual peace would be the "most contented" (*meiman*), pleasant and happy (*xingfu*) society for all mankind".¹⁵¹ On several other occasions, Mao was to refer to "happiness" as being a characteristic of such a society.¹⁵² Moreover, communist society, as Mao was at pains to point out in On New Democracy, would be distinguished from all previous societies by virtue of the principles of social function made possible by the disappearance of classes:

Communism is at once a complete system of proletarian ideology (*sixiang*) and a new social system. It is different from any other ideology or social system, and is the most complete, progressive, revolutionary and rational system in human history.¹⁵³

From the characteristics attributed by Mao to the future era of peace and the communist society, it appears that his vision was strongly influenced by his roots in the Chinese tradition; for such a society would be blessed by peace, harmony, love of humanity, happiness, and in which human behaviour would be governed by the

150. Ji VIII, p. 140; SW III, p. 91; XJ III, pp. 827-8.

151. Ji V, p. 318.

152. SW II, p. 358; XJ II, p. 644; Ji VII, p. 173; also Ji VI, p. 227 where Mao asserted "Communism is mankind's most happy (*meiman*) social system".

153. SW II, p. 360; XJ II, pp. 646-7; Ji VII, p. 176.

Confucian concept of "reciprocity" (*shu*) from which could derive a truly non-class utilitarianism.¹⁵⁴ The clearest indication of Marxist influence in Mao's future idyll was his insistence on its classlessness, and it is evident that the centrality of class and class struggle in his conception of social function was the factor which permitted the union of the two rather disparate historical periodizations employed during the Yan'an period; for ultimately it was the existence or non-existence of classes which determined whether mankind lived at peace or war. While the notion of an imminent era of perpetual peace may raise some queries about Mao's conception of the class nature of a future socialist society, it would seem that he regarded a genuine and perpetual peace as only possible in a society free from the antagonisms of class hostility. It is no mere coincidence that Mao regarded the onset of war within human history as dating from the emergence of class divisions within primitive society. Nor is it a coincidence that Mao saw no contradiction in incorporating the several stages of class society in the Marxist periodization within the second epoch of war. For class was the *bête noire* at whose door could be laid all responsibility for the evils of society; and war, particularly during the Yan'an period, emerged as the most insidious of these evils.

It is instructive that lacking amongst the characteristics of Mao's future society is the quality of personal individual liberty; nowhere in the texts of the Yan'an period is there demonstrated any

154. The Confucian concept of *shu* or "reciprocity" is the corollary of *ji suo bu yu, wu shi yu ren* utilized by Mao in his polemic with Peng Dehuai referred to earlier. Analects XV, 23 runs as follows: "Tsze-Kung asked, saying, 'Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?' The master said, 'Is not RECIPROCITY such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others'". See Legge, Op. cit., p. 138.

preoccupation with the possibility that communism (or for that matter, the third epoch of perpetual peace) would witness an enhancement of the freedom of the individual citizens of such a society. This gap cannot be explained by recourse to its lack in the Marxist tradition; there is, without doubt, a strong libertarian element in Marx's futurism, and as we have seen, Lenin was preoccupied with freedom as a feature of the higher phase of communism. Mao's neglect of this characteristic possibly stems from the weakness of liberalism in the Chinese tradition, and its largely ephemeral existence in the early decades of the twentieth century and serious decline following the May Fourth Movement. The liberalism of Liang Qichao and Hu Shi, for example, was regarded by Mao and many of his revolutionary contemporaries as based on a hopelessly misguided approach to the analysis of society, and which could not hope to remedy the class-derived ailments of society through a piece-meal social engineering which avoided the root-and-branch surgery of revolution. Mao's Combat Liberalism (1937) indicates that he perceived liberalism as a negative (if not harmful) creed, although his attack on it is essentially polemical, based as it is on a false construction of the main tenets of liberalism.¹⁵⁵

It is also instructive that Mao's comments on the future society are generally lacking in reference to any technological sophistication or automation as necessary characteristics of such a society. Although Mao was very sensitive to the need for economic growth and development to build a powerful Chinese nation, his vision for the future during the Yan'an period was couched largely in terms recognizable as deriving from traditional Chinese cultural elements which emphasized peace and harmony, rather than economic development or technological sophistication.

155. SW II, pp. 31-33; XJ II, pp. 330-332; Ji V, pp. 257-260.

Mao's faith in the realization of such a future society derived at one level from his acceptance of the supposedly scientific status of the predictions within the Marxist tradition; he accepted as almost self-evident that such predictions were scientifically based. However, Mao proceeded to interpret Marxism's historical goals in essentially Chinese terms, and it is this factor which precipitated the weakened emphasis on technological sophistication as an element of the future communist society.

Mao's vision of the future during the Yan'an period would thus appear as something of a pastiche, a cultural amalgam of traditional Chinese categories filtered through Kang Youwei's utopianism, and predicated on certain key elements of Marxism. Although Mao overtly indicated his historical optimism as deriving from Marxism,¹⁵⁶ the eschatological fervour evident in his references to the third epoch of perpetual peace must be viewed as a function and symptom of the chaotic and violent environment within which Mao gave literary expression to his ideas.

This eschatological theme does not disappear from the revised post-Liberation official version of Mao's Selected Works, but explicit references to the three epochs in historical development have been removed (although the notion of such a schematization does remain in adumbrated form). There are several possible explanations for this redaction. Firstly, the concept of the three epochs is too obviously of Chinese extraction, and its marriage with the orthodox Marxist periodization of history does (as we have seen) involve problems of isolating common criteria in demarcating temporal boundaries. Moreover,

156. See for example SW III, p. 232; XJ III, p. 960; Ji IX, pp. 222-3.

the manner in which Mao employed the time-scale of the three epochs is anything but progressive and dialectical. Indeed, there is something of a nostalgia for lost innocence in Mao's retrospective ruminations on the primitive communism of the first era of peace. The transition to the second era with its class divisions and warfare could hardly be viewed as anything but historical degeneration. The history of this second era is portrayed as an extended and violent movement in history to a future age, the virtues of which are largely those of the first epoch of peace. Historical development is thus a movement through and a final ascension from the trough in human history caused by the degeneration of primitive communism. This atavistic projection of an admired past into a desired future was possibly felt to be too reminiscent of the traditional Chinese tendency to retrospect historically on the virtues of the distant past. Secondly, it is probable that Mao and his editors felt obliged to supplement the contingency of such a future society on social development inferred by Marxist analysis. In the official version of On Protracted War, for example, the attainment of perpetual peace is now predicated on the elimination of capitalism.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, the following addition to Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War (1936) emphasizes the elimination of classes and states as preceding the realization of the new era of human history:

When human society advances to the point where classes and states are eliminated, there will be no more wars, counter-revolutionary or revolutionary, unjust or just; that will be the era of perpetual peace for mankind.¹⁵⁸

This historical optimism and strong eschatological themes which

157. Cf. Ji VI, p. 95; SW II, p. 149; XJ II, p. 443.

158. SW I, p. 183; XJ I, p. 158.

characterized Mao's Yan'an writings appear to be in striking contrast to the emphasis he placed at the same time on a close attention to gaining the initiative and supremacy during each encounter or historical stage. He did not, however, appear to apprehend any contradiction between his certainty in the ultimate realization of a predicted historical future and the necessity for painstaking political effort to actualize that future. There is without doubt something of an antinomy within the orthodox Marxist tradition (much akin to the antinomy of free will within both the Augustinian and Calvinist theology and philosophy of history) created by the juxtaposition of a determined future against the exhortation of the true believer to struggle for its realization. If the future is determined, and the future society largely a function of the dynamics of societal development, why struggle for its realization? It is quite clear that Mao had a supreme confidence in the historical goals raised by Marxism, and as we have pointed out, such confidence derived in large measure from an acceptance of Marxism's status as a science, and thus capable of predicting history's future course. Such confidence did not lead in Mao's case, however, to a complacent and assured quietism, and the attendant wait for the inevitable; to the contrary, it appears if anything to have acted as a spur to his revolutionary activity.¹⁵⁹

How are we to explain this coexistence of historical certainty and attention to incremental advances in Mao's historical thinking? Firstly, Mao did on occasion utilize (with allowance for cultural variation) the "locomotive of history" analogy. This analogy likens

159. Karl Popper refers, in The Open Society and Its Enemies, to the "wide gulf between Marx's activism and his historicism". Taking this as his theme, Charles Wei-Hsun Fu has argued that this gulf is "uniquely bridged in Mao's Thought..."; see "Confucianism, Marxism-Leninism and Mao: A Critical Study", Journal of Chinese Philosophy I (1974), pp. 339-371.

history to a locomotive, the course and destination of which is determined by the tracks on which it runs; the most that can be achieved by human effort is the acceleration or retardation of the locomotive along its prescribed course; nothing can be done to deflect the Juggernaut from its path. Within this analogy, the role of the revolutionary can be no more than that of the enthusiastic engineer, fuelling the locomotive to increase its progress; it is beyond his power, however, to alter its direction. In On Practice, Mao utilized such an analogy to criticize the "die-hards" (*wangupai*) within the revolutionary ranks:

These people fail to see that the struggle of opposites has already pushed the objective process forward while their knowledge has stopped at the old stage. This is characteristic of all die-hards. Their thinking is divorced from social practice, and they cannot march ahead to lead the chariot of society (*shehui chelun*; lit., "the cartwheels of society"); they simply trail behind (*zai chezi hounian*), grumbling that it goes too fast and trying to drag it back or put it into reverse.¹⁶⁰

A similar analogy appears in a speech made by Mao in May 1937:

Why do we put forward the three related slogans of "consolidate peace", "fight for democracy", and "carry out armed resistance"? The answer is in order to push the wheels of our revolution (*geming chelun*) forward and that circumstances allow us to do so.¹⁶¹

Again, in a section of On Coalition Government (1945) later excised from the Selected Works, Mao argued that the characteristic of the new political situation was the organizational strength of the people of the world predicated on their increasing consciousness and unity; "It is this that determines", he asserted, "the target

160. SW I, p. 307; XJ I, p. 271; BZF II, p. 47.

161. SW I, p. 286; XJ I, p. 250; Ji V, p. 208.

towards which the cartwheels (*cheliun*) of world history are moving, and the path that will be selected to arrive at that target".¹⁶²

Mao's employment of a "locomotive of history" style analogy leaves a strong impression that he perceived judicious political action as facilitating the "objective process" of history along its preordained route. That Mao did at times view the course of history from this seemingly deterministic perspective is clear from other comments made during the Yan'an period which correlate exactly with the "locomotive of history" analogy. For example, in On Coalition Government, he asserted that "the general trend of history...is already clearly decided and will not change".¹⁶³ In the same article, Mao backed up his argument for a coalition government by insisting that such a political system was inevitable anyway:

This is the only course China can take, whatever the intention of the Kuomintang or other parties, groups or individuals, whether they like it or not, and whether or not they are conscious of it. This is an historical law, an inexorable trend which no force can reverse.¹⁶⁴

This utilization of the inevitable to clinch a political argument emerged also in an article of May 1939 written to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the May Fourth Movement; "If anyone asks why a communist should strive to bring into being first a bourgeois-democratic society and then a socialist society, our answer is; we are following the inevitable course of history".¹⁶⁵

162. Ji IX, p. 187.

163. SW III, p. 207; XJ III, p. 932; Ji IX, p. 186.

164. SW III, p. 242; XJ III, p. 970; Ji IX, p. 236.

165. SW II, p. 238; XJ II, p. 523; Ji VI, p. 322.

There is thus ample evidence to suggest that Mao perceived a future communist society within an era of perpetual peace as an historically necessary stage in the development of human society. He was not, however, under any illusion that the path to this promised land was necessarily straight and smooth or that the progress of history towards its preordained goal need be constant and meet with no set-backs. "History", he averred in 1945, "follows a tortuous (*quzhe*) course".¹⁶⁶ Nowhere was the tortuous course of history more evident than in the pursuit of political objectives through armed struggle, and Mao was to refer to this characteristic of war in his essay On Protracted War (1938); "Events have their twists and turns and do not follow a straight line, and war is no exception".¹⁶⁷ Nor did Mao discount the possibility that history may temporarily be thrown into reverse gear. In a speech of 1937, such a reversal was raised as a distinct possibility; "history might reverse its course (*zou huitou lu*) for a while and peace might meet with setbacks".¹⁶⁸ However, such set-backs were necessarily temporary for the pattern of history was set; "a temporary retrogression (*houtui xianxiang*) cannot change the general law of history".¹⁶⁹

The existence of such textual evidence should provide some pause to those analysts who make the easy assumption that Mao had abandoned the determinism which had become a hallmark of orthodox Marxism. For, as we have seen, for Mao history was an "objective process" which involved an "inexorable trend" along an "inevitable course". The important point is not that Mao either retained or

166. SW III, p. 210; XJ III, p. 935; Ji IX, p. 192.

167. SW II, p. 183; XJ II, p. 476; Ji VI, p. 136.

168. SW I, p. 286; XJ I, p. 250; Ji V, p. 208.

169. SW I, p. 289; XJ I, p. 253; Ji V, p. 212.

abandoned such determinism, but that it was able to coexist in his thought with an emphasis on political action and a close attention to gaining the upper hand during each particular historical stage. His utilization of the "locomotive of history" analogy would suggest that he perceived political action as having the capacity to accelerate (or in certain cases, retard) the "objective process" of history along its "inevitable course", although this should not be misconstrued as attributing a limitless potential to the historical effectivity of the "political" realm of society to totally determine the rate of historical progress.

Secondly, the coexistence of historical certainty with attention to incremental advances within Mao's thought can also be explained by reference to the function that historical goals performed in providing coherence, rationality and direction to his formulation of political and military strategy and tactics. Without such goals, these activities would be unavoidably random, lacking temporal coordination or long-term purpose. In an address of 1937, Mao indicated clearly that he perceived the function of historical goals as giving direction to current activities:

We are fighting for socialism...It is the great future goal to which our present efforts are directed; if we lose sight of the goal, we cease to be Communists. But equally we cease to be Communists if we relax our efforts today.¹⁷⁰

That Mao perceived the necessity for formulating current tactics in the light of long-term goals is also made clear from the following passage from Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary

170. SW I, p. 290; XJ I, p. 254; Ji V, p. 213.

War (1936):

In war as well as politics, planning only one step at a time as one goes is a harmful way of directing matters. After each step, it is necessary to examine the ensuing concrete changes and to modify or develop one's strategic and operational plans accordingly, or otherwise one is liable to make the mistake of rushing ahead regardless of danger. However, it is absolutely essential to have a long-term plan which has been thought out in its general outline and which covers an entire strategic stage or even several strategic stages...171

It is significant that the importance of long-term goals is recognized for politics as well as the operation of war. The political and military campaigns of a particular present are thus dictated not merely by temporally-limited exigencies, but by the belief that long-range future goals are brought somewhat nearer by their implementation. In this way, a present is defined by its future, for it is given meaning and significance by its perceived relationship to a future condition of society having an ontological status of more than just a possibility. This connection between the present and the future is in evidence in Mao's utilization of the Leninist distinction between a minimum and a maximum programme. The minimum programme functions as that which is feasible and possible given the constraints of the current objective situation. Although it falls far short of the perceived and desired goals of history (a description of which functions as the maximum programme), it is legitimate in that it is regarded as impelling society one step closer to those goals. In On New Democracy, Mao was to employ this Leninist distinction to reinforce his argument that China was not objectively ready for socialism, and that therefore a minimum programme of New Democracy was necessary:

171. SW I, p. 233; XJ I, p. 205; Ji V, p. 148.

Everybody knows that the Communist Party has an immediate and a future programme, a minimum and a maximum programme, with regard to the social system it advocates. For the present period, New Democracy, and for the future, socialism; these are two parts of an organic whole, guided by one and the same communist ideology.¹⁷²

Further on, Mao asserted that "beyond its (communism's) minimum programme, it has a maximum programme, i.e., the programme for the attainment of socialism and communism".¹⁷³ In On Coalition Government, Mao once again utilized this distinction to rationalize the incremental advance towards communism:

Such is the general or fundamental programme which we advocate for the present stage, the entire stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This is our minimum programme as against our future or maximum programme of socialism and communism.¹⁷⁴

Are we to assume, however, that Mao's concentration on gaining the advantage in each encounter with the enemy or during each historical stage merely had the purpose of accelerating what was in his opinion an inevitable process to which the action itself was somehow extrinsic? We have just observed that he tended to speak of the "objective process" of history as an "inexorable trend" with "inevitable" goals. Or did Mao perceive the actions initiated by himself and the Chinese Communist Party as an integral aspect of this "objective process" of history? According to his perception of historical causation during the Yan'an period, "politics" was (as we have seen) part of society's "basis", the causally generative and formative area of society; Mao regarded developments within this

172. SW II, p. 361; XJ II, p. 647; Ji VII, p. 177.

173. SW II, pp. 362-3; XJ II, p. 649; Ji VII, p. 179.

174. SW III, p. 232; XJ III, p. 959; Ji IX, p. 222.

"basis" as dictating the direction and ultimate goals of society and its history. "Politics" within this "basis" incorporated political organization and actions taken in pursuit of formulated policy; consequently, political actions were part of the causal mechanism generating historical progress as well as influencing its rate of development. As such, political organization and action were not somehow extrinsic elements, having the capacity for an aloof detachment from the "objective process" itself and to be employed only as external pace-makers; to the contrary, they were integral cogs of the total social mechanism. A good example of this is Mao's belief that the political leadership extended by the proletariat and its party to the peasantry was one of the most significant features of the Chinese revolution, and the factor capable of preventing its degeneration into a traditional and atavistic peasant rebellion.¹⁷⁵ Lack of such political leadership was indicated as one of the factors which had led to such a long period of stagnation during China's feudal period.¹⁷⁶ For Mao the emergence of an industrial proletariat and especially its vanguard political party was a development of great significance within the "basis" of China's society, in both its "economic" and "political" realms. This development within the "basis", regardless of the diminutive size of the proletariat, was sufficient to ensure that China's revolution would be modern in character and capable of preparing the ground for the establishment of socialism.

Mao thus perceived "politics" as an important element in dictating historical causation, as well as influencing the rate of historical progress. This is not to say that Mao perceived "politics"

175. SW II, p. 317; XJ II, p. 598; Ji VII, p. 114.

176. SW II, p. 309; XJ II, p. 588; Ji VII, p. 102.

as autonomous from other historically generative elements within the "economic" realm of society's "basis" (such as the forces and relations of production); rather, the effectivity of "politics" to accelerate the historical process was circumscribed by these other elements, just as the further development of these other elements was dependent on developments in the "political" realm. This mutual interdependence of the elements of the "basis" of society indicated to Mao the importance of political action and organization, but indicated also the objective limitations such interdependence created. Within this framework, Mao was prepared to exploit the possibility for political activity to its limit, but was, during the Yan'an period, very mindful of not "rushing ahead" of the objective situation. This maximization of the potential of "politics" within the parameters of the objective situation was certainly one of the factors upon which Mao premised his certainty in the attainment of "inevitable" historical goals. In On Protracted War, Mao was to indicate the "political" mobilization of human potential conjoined with other necessary social and economic factors of development as constituting the historical premise for the "achievement of a new world of perpetual peace and brightness".¹⁷⁷ Historical factors external to the "political" realm indicated the certainty of such a future; within the "political" realm itself, appropriate measures taken in accordance with a correct reading of the objective situation and historical trends would ensure the attainment of that future. Mao's confidence in this "inevitable" future was thus, in effect, a confidence in his own ability to deliver the goods within this "political" realm, a confidence presumably felt justified by the successful outcome of the Anti-Japanese War and the Civil War which followed.

177. SW II, p. 150; XJ II, p. 444, Ji VI, p. 96.

FIGURE 5: Mao Zedong's Dual Periodization of Historical Time

THREE EPOCH TIME-SCALE	MARXIST PERIODIZATION	TIME
FIRST EPOCH OF PEACE	PRIMITIVE COMMUNIST SOCIETY	SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS B.C. ↓ 3,000 B.C.
	SLAVE SOCIETY	↓ 249 B.C.
SECOND EPOCH OF WAR	FEUDAL SOCIETY	↓ 1840
	BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION: OLD DEMOCRACY	↓ 1919
	BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION: NEW DEMOCRACY	↓ 1936-45 ?
THIRD EPOCH OF PERPETUAL PEACE	SOCIALIST SOCIETY	"dividing line" ↓ ?
	COMMUNIST SOCIETY	↓ ?

III. Philosophy of Science: The Derivation of Laws of History

For Mao, science meant "honest, solid knowledge"¹⁷⁸ based on an "all-sided" (*quanmian*) and objective approach.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, "science is truth",¹⁸⁰ and Mao deferred to men of science as being "honest".¹⁸¹ Mao's view of scientific methodology was based firmly on the belief that the inductive method represented the only reliable means of gaining access to the truth of the objective world. An investigation of this objective world commenced from numerous observations of specific instances, and only after numerous observations could the investigator draw conclusions or generalizations (in the form of laws or principles) from the available evidence. Mao consistently rejected the deductive approach, for he perceived it as contrary to the scientific method of Marxism:

In discussing a problem, we should start from reality and not from definitions...We are Marxists, and Marxism teaches us that in our approach to a problem we should start from objective facts, not from abstract definitions, and that we should derive our guiding principles, policies and measures from an analysis of these facts.¹⁸²

Mao's conception of the inductive method is captured in his frequent use of the four character phrase "seeking truth from facts" (*shishi qiu shi*). Mao defined the components of this phrase as follows; "'Facts' are all the things that exist objectively, 'truth' means the

178. SW III, p. 22, XJ III, p. 758; Ji VII, p. 321.

179. SW II, p. 115; XJ II, p. 409; Ji VI, p. 51; also SW I, p. 296; XJ I, p. 260.

180. SW III, p. 57; XJ III, p. 792; Ji VIII, p. 95.

181. SW III, p. 44; XJ III, p. 780; Ji VIII, p. 77.

182. SW III, p. 74; XJ III, p. 810; Ji VIII, p. 118.

internal relations of objective things, namely their regularities (*guililixing*), and 'to seek' means to study".¹⁸³ To "seek truth from facts" represented for Mao "the scientific approach",¹⁸⁴ and in order to pursue this approach one had to "appropriate the material in detail and subject it to scientific analysis and synthesis".¹⁸⁵

Although Mao made it quite clear that laws and principles are the end result of numerous observations of the functioning of the real world, he was somewhat reticent about what constituted a sufficient number of observations prior to the formulation of such laws. From the rather unusual manner in which Mao employed the concept "law" (*guilil*), it is probable that he regarded the necessary number of observations as being determined by the nature of the phenomenon under investigation, and that themes and trends would present themselves to the observer when a sufficient number of observations had been taken. There are, however, no clear guidelines in Mao's Yan'an writings on the actual process of law derivation. We can, nevertheless, by examining the manner in which Mao employed the term *guilil*, make some general comments on the status of "law" in his thought.

In the philosophy of science as this has developed in the Western intellectual tradition, the concept of "law" (in the scientific sense) has come to denote a universally valid description of the behaviour of a category. This description in the inductive paradigm is founded on the supposedly unprejudiced observation of numerous specific instances within the category under investigation. The

183. SW III, p. 22; XJ III, p. 759; Ji VII, p. 322.

184. SW II, p. 339; XJ II, p. 623; Ji VII, p. 148.

185. SW III, p. 21; XJ III, p. 757; Ji VII, p. 320.

assumption is made that because all observed instances of that category behaved in a certain manner (that is, indicated a regular and predictable pattern of behaviour), all instances of that category would behave in a like manner. The important point is that a law is based on the presumption of exact replication of all instances, both observed and unobserved, within a category; that is, that the law has a universal validity for all instances of a category.

Although Mao explicitly espoused an inductive methodology, his approach to the derivation of laws (of society, history, war, for example) departed in important detail from the inductive paradigm. According to Mao, although laws of a universal status did exist, it was possible also to derive laws which did not have such a universal status, and which were applicable only to specific instances within a general category. That it was possible in Mao's view to formulate "laws" of specific (rather than universal) validity is made evident if we turn to an examination of Mao's analysis of the phenomenon of war. In a document of 1936 entitled Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War, Mao was to make the following instructive comment:

...the different laws for directing wars are determined by the different circumstances of those wars--differences in their time, place and nature (*xingshi*). As regards the time factor, both war and its laws develop; each historical stage has its special characteristics, and hence the laws in each historical stage have their special characteristics and cannot be mechanically applied in another stage. As for the nature of war, since revolutionary and counter-revolutionary war both have their special characteristics, the laws governing them also have their own characteristics, and those applying to one cannot be mechanically transferred to the other. As for the factor of place, since every country or nation, especially a large country or nation, has its own characteristics, the laws of war for each country or nation also

have their own characteristics, and here, too, those applying to one cannot be mechanically transferred to the other. In studying the laws for directing wars that occur at different historical stages, that differ in nature and that are waged in different places and by different nations, we must fix our attention on the characteristics and development of each, and must oppose a mechanical approach to the problem of war.¹⁸⁶

It is clearly evident from this interesting passage that Mao rejected the notion that there can only be laws of war in general. To the contrary, it is possible and desirable to seek out laws describing the regularities of specific theatres of war. This is necessary because the laws of war are developmental, altering as the nature of war itself alters. Laws arising from one geographical area may not be relevant in another area, or for that matter in the same location at a different point in time. The laws of war may also vary according to the "nature" of the war, whether it is revolutionary or counter-revolutionary. In fact, a "law" may be derived from a particular war situation which, because of the unique admixture of "time, place and nature", may be inapplicable in any other war situation. A "law" thus becomes a description of the regularities of a specific instance of a general category (for example, a particular battle or campaign), rather than the category itself (war in general). A "law" of this sort has a validity and applicability only for the instance in question, and because of the (perhaps) unrepeatable nature of that specific instance, can have no pretension to a general validity for other specific instances within the category as a whole.

It could be argued that for Mao the specific instance became

186. SW I, p. 181; XJ I, p. 157; Ji V, p. 86.

(for purposes of law derivation) a category in itself. However, such an argument involves two problems. Firstly, it suggests the possibility of an infinite regression in which a category is capable of continued sub-division to provide increasingly more specific laws having increasingly less general validity. Secondly, there is the problem of repeatability. By virtue of the norms of inductive procedure to which Mao paid lip-service, a scientific law must describe a feature of a category which will be exactly repeated on every observation of that feature. A law thus has a predictive capacity which is premised on the repeatability of the phenomenon described by that law. It appears certain, however, that Mao was not overly concerned with the problem of repeatability, and he was to accord the status of law to descriptions of unrepeatable specific instances. In this approach, the concept of scientific law as having a high degree of predictability amongst other instances within the same category is undermined. In conventional inductive usage, a law is a universal statement of a characteristic of a category; Mao's handling of the concept of law indicates however that a "law" might have a relative and temporary validity only, its applicability over and above the specific circumscribed by the improbability of an exact replication of the constituent features which made up the instance from which the "law" was derived. Mao indeed referred to the historical relativity of the "laws" that he employed; "all the laws for directing war develop as history develops and as war develops; nothing is changeless".¹⁸⁷ In Mao's hands, a "law" did not automatically have a general or universal validity, but provided at the level of the specific instance an interpretation of

187. SW I, p. 182; XJ I, pp. 157-8; Ji V, pp. 87-8.

utility in understanding that specific instance. The very specificity of such a "law" was conducive to an appreciation of the exact regularities of a specific instance, and that "law" might be of some utility in providing practical lessons for the understanding of other instances within the category; no assumption could be made, however, that an immediate extrapolation or prediction could be made on the basis of such a specific "law".

From Mao's references to such specific "laws", it seems in fact that the notion of extrapolation or prediction played a minimal role. Mao believed that in order to understand the "laws" governing a thing, one had to be cognizant of that thing's "situation" (*qingxing*), its "nature" (*xingshi*), and its relationships with other things.¹⁸⁸ The internal relationships within a thing represented its "lawlikeness" (*guilixing*),¹⁸⁹ the "inner thread" (*guanchuan*) constituting its "laws".¹⁹⁰ A specific "law" thus represented a description of a phenomenon's internal relationships, and of the regularities characteristic of those relationships. Mao emphasized the interpretation of such regularities, rather than insisting on a necessary correlation between these regularities and the regularities evident in other instances of the same category. Such correlative regularities might of course exist, but in the application of a "law" derived from one instance within a category, one had necessarily to remain sensitive to possible differences in other instances in order to avoid a mechanical application of a "law", the general applicability of which might be limited by the uniqueness of the specific instance from which it was derived. This point is central to a proper understanding of

188. SW I, p. 179; XJ I, p. 155; Ji V, p. 84.

189. SW III, p. 22; XJ III, p. 759; Ji VII, p. 322.

190. SW I, p. 301; XJ I, p. 266.

Mao's concept of "law" at the level of the specific instance. Mao was interested in a scientific "law" at this level for its utility, largely for purposes of formulation of political and military strategy.¹⁹¹ Knowledge of the regularities evident in one instance (that is, its "law") could aid in the interpretation of the regularities of a related instance, but such knowledge, if mechanically applied, could conceal regularities specific to the instance under consideration and lead subsequently to mistaken strategies or tactics. As Mao was to point out, "the laws of war in each historical stage have their special characteristics and cannot be mechanically applied in another stage".¹⁹²

Are we to assume however that for Mao there could be no transcendence of the specific to allow the formulation of laws having a universal validity? Although there is without doubt a Heraclitean element in Mao's thought ("nothing is changeless"), it is also certain that he believed in the existence of universal norms which while being built upon but at the same time transcending the specific, provided a binding framework for the interpretation and explanation of nature and society. Mao perceived the derivation of such universal laws as proceeding (in accordance with inductive logic) from the specific to the general. If one were to arrive at objective truth, the necessary connection between the specific and the general had to be maintained; "In the nature of things, the particular and the general are inseparably linked; once separated they depart from objective

191. As Mao was to point out in On Practice: "Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws to actively change the world". BZF II, p. 44; SW I, p. 304; XJ I, p. 268.

192. SW I, p. 181; XJ I, p. 157; Ji V, p. 86.

truth".¹⁹³ It appears that for Mao the "laws" governing the specific constituted the building blocks from which "laws" of wider generality were constructed; each level of this inductive pyramid resting and relying on an immediately lower level of generality, until the entire edifice found foundation on "laws" describing regularities at the level of the specific instance. Although "all genuine knowledge originates in direct experience", it was possible to utilize the direct experience accumulated by ancestors and contemporaries (that is, indirect experience) coupled with one's own direct experience to provide the data for the construction of this pyramid of "laws".¹⁹⁴ Laws previously formulated, as long as "scientifically abstracted" from the direct experience of others, could be employed in completing a scientific view of reality. Thus, by Mao's criteria, it was valid to accept a universal theory such as Marxism as representing a scientific reflection of objective reality if it had been constructed with regard to the norms of inductive procedure, building from the particular to the universal, and utilizing the distilled wisdom of "scientifically abstracted" indirect experience. Mao did not perceive, therefore, any contradiction between utilizing an empiricist methodology under an over-arching world view, for he accepted implicitly that this world view (Marxist dialectical and historical materialism) had been constructed in accordance with the rather idiosyncratic inductionist methodology he espoused.¹⁹⁵

193. Ji VI, p. 269; PTMTT, p. 183.

194. SW I, p. 300; XJ I, p. 264-5.

195. It is for this reason somewhat misleading for Schwartz to claim that Mao "combined inductionism and pragmatism with firm views about the absolute and eternal validity of certain abstractions of his own choosing". See Benjamin I. Schwartz, "The Philosopher", in Dick Wilson (ed.), Mao Tse-tung in the Scales of History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 29.

There are obviously serious difficulties with Mao's position. The possible construction of an inductive pyramid to permit the formulation of universal laws is threatened by Mao's insistence that "laws" of the specific instance may not be capable of replication. The absence of the criterion of repeatability in framing "laws" of low generality calls into question the possibility of utilizing such "laws" as the raw material from which general laws might be constructed. Mao's insistence on building from the particular to the general may thus have rested on an unresolved contradiction in his methodological approach. The important point remains, however, that Mao believed it possible to formulate both universal laws and specific "laws", whatever the tenuous methodological connection between them. It will become evident (in Section IV of this chapter) that this distinction between universal laws and specific "laws" was central to the manner in which Mao approached the problem of Sinifying Marxism; the taking of a universal theory, providing it with national form, and this without detracting from its universal status.

Let us now turn to a brief analysis of some of the specific historical "laws" formulated by Mao, and the method by which he arrived at them. In his Introducing the Communist (1939), Mao detailed the three major stages through which the Chinese Communist Party had passed; the revolution of 1924-27, the War of Agrarian Revolution of 1927-37, and the War of Resistance against Japan.¹⁹⁶ From the experience gained from these three stages, Mao formulated six "laws":

- (1) The Chinese national bourgeoisie will take part in the struggle against imperialism and the feudal warlords at certain times and to a

196. . SW II, p. 288; XJ II, p. 569; Ji VII, p. 74.

certain extent...(2) In other historical circumstances, the Chinese national bourgeoisie will vacillate and defect because of its economic and political flabbiness...(3) The Chinese big bourgeoisie, which is comprador in character, is a class which directly serves imperialism and is fostered by it...(4) The Comprador big bourgeoisie continues to be the most reactionary even when it joins the united front alongside the proletariat against the common enemy...(5) The peasantry is the firm ally of the proletariat. (6) The urban petty bourgeoisie is a reliable ally.¹⁹⁷

Mao then goes on to claim that the "validity (*zhengquexing*) of these laws was confirmed during the First Great Revolution and the Agrarian Revolution, and it is being confirmed again in the present War of Resistance".¹⁹⁸ If we look closely at the way Mao has articulated these "laws", several points of interest emerge. Firstly, each of the six "laws" entails a description of the behaviour of a generalized social category, either a class, or a stratum within a class; such social categories are thus deemed susceptible to description and prediction at the level of a specific "law", even when such categories may encompass (as the peasantry did) several hundred million individuals. Secondly, the specific "laws" (1) and (2) referred to by Mao, when placed together exclude all other possibilities, and are thus incapable of refutation. Mao was elsewhere to argue that genuine science could not be refuted; "what is scientific never fears criticism, for science is truth and fears no refutation".¹⁹⁹ However, by coining "laws" in tandem which provided explanation for seemingly opposed contingencies, Mao appeared to be precluding the possibility of any refutation whatsoever. Mao had utilized this device to provide

197. SW II, pp. 288-9; XJ II, pp. 569-70; Ji VII, pp. 74-5.

198. Ibid.

199. SW III, p. 57; XJ III, p. 792; Ji VIII, p. 95.

a scientific status for his assertion of the obvious--that there were both favourable and unfavourable conditions in China's revolutionary war:

There are two aspects of China's revolutionary war. They exist simultaneously, that is, there are favourable factors and there are difficulties. This is the fundamental law of China's revolutionary war, from which many other laws ensue.²⁰⁰

Thirdly, some of the terms utilized by Mao are rather vague, and would appear to allow conflicting interpretations as to the meaning of these "laws". For example, what (one might ask) constitutes economic and political "flabbiness" (*ruanruoxing*); and what is the difference between a "firm" (*jiangu*) ally and a "reliable" (*kekao*) ally? Mao, however, considered the terms precise enough to reiterate several months later the fundamental nature of the "laws" described in Introducing the Communist:

Among all the classes in Chinese society, the peasantry is a firm ally of the working class, the urban petty bourgeoisie is a reliable ally, and the national bourgeoisie is an ally in certain periods and to a certain extent. This is one of the fundamental laws established by China's modern revolutionary history.²⁰¹

Mao's propensity to derive "laws" from the regularities characterizing specific instances has already been noted. In order to compensate for this utilization of the concept of "law" at such a low level of generality, Mao frequently resorted to qualification of the concept to cover those laws describing situations over and above the specific. In On New Democracy, for example, Mao once again described the dual

200. SW I, p. 199; XJ I, p. 175; Ji V, p. 108.

201. SW II, p. 325; XJ II, p. 608; Ji VII, p. 127.

character of the bourgeoisie; "this is a general law (*yiban guilü*) applicable to the bourgeoisie everywhere in the world, but the trait is more pronounced in the Chinese bourgeoisie".²⁰² In this assertion of a "general law" we are provided with an excellent example of how the specific instance (in this case, the Chinese bourgeoisie) did not conform exactly to the regularities of the category as a whole (the bourgeoisie generally). Because of the more pronounced dual character of the Chinese bourgeoisie, the "law" which described this characteristic of the bourgeoisie in general is denoted as having a "general" status, in contradistinction to the specific "law" necessary to describe this trait of the Chinese bourgeoisie. A second example of Mao's qualification of the concept of "law" appears in On Protracted War; "since China is resisting, it is an inexorable law (*biran de guilü*) that Japan will try to repress this resistance until the force of her repression is exceeded by the force of China's resistance".²⁰³ It would seem that the necessity for Mao's qualification of a "law" as "inexorable" or "general" stemmed from the diminished extrapolative value that he conceded to specific "laws" which he described, and that such qualification was intended to emphasize the stronger predictive capacity of the "inexorable" and "general" laws for indicating future reoccurrences of the phenomenon they described.

Although Mao did not (as we have observed) discuss in any systematic detail the actual process of law derivation and formulation, it is useful to piece together Mao's references to this process. Mao believed that in order to derive "laws" of society, history or warfare, one had to do some "hard thinking":

202. SW II, p. 349; XJ II, p. 635; Ji VII, p. 162.

203. SW II, p. 184; XJ II, p. 476; Ji VI, p. 137.

The only way to study the laws governing a war situation as a whole is to do some hard thinking (*yongxin qu xiangyixiang*). For what pertains to the situation as a whole is not visible to the eye, and we can understand it only by hard thinking; there is no other way. But because the situation as a whole is made up of parts, people with experience of the parts, experience of campaigns and tactics, can understand matters of a higher order provided they are willing to think hard.²⁰⁴

The six "laws" enunciated in Introducing the Communist were, according to Mao, the result of a summing up of the eighteen years of the Party's history to that date.²⁰⁵ Mao frequently invoked history (as a summation of experience) to reinforce his interpretation of "laws"; for example, "the history of our ten years of war has proved the validity of this law".²⁰⁶ This notion of laws deriving from a summation of experience is akin to the process of perceptual knowledge developing into rational knowledge, as described by Mao in On Practice:

Fully to reflect a thing in its totality, to reflect its essence, to reflect its inherent laws, it is necessary through the exercise of thought to reconstruct the rich data of sense perception, discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from one to the other and from the outside to the inside, in order to form a system of concepts and theories--it is necessary to make a leap from perceptual to rational knowledge.²⁰⁷

Here again, although couched in rather more sophisticated terminology, the actual technique for deriving knowledge of the regularities of the world (that is, its "laws") is still reduced to the "exercise of

204. SW I, p. 185; XJ I, p. 161; Ji V, pp. 91-2.

205. SW II, pp. 288, 295, 296; XJ II, pp. 568, 576, 577; Ji VII, pp. 73, 82, 83.

206. SW I, p. 199; XJ I, p. 175; Ji V, p. 108.

207. SW I, p. 303; XJ I, p. 268. Emphasis added.

thought"; in other words, doing some "hard thinking".

Let us conclude this section with a brief note on a problem of translation. Although Mao consistently perceived himself as applying an inductive scientific approach to the study of history and society, the specific "laws" which he derived from that study would seem to be of a questionable status by the norms of that approach. The problems of specificity and repeatability which Mao did not resolve, suggest that the term *guilü* was utilized to cover a wide range of generalizations having varying degrees of generality and predictive utility. As this is the case, it would seem that there might be an impropriety in consistently translating into English as "law" Mao's usage of the term *guilü*. This may seem a rather unimportant point, but it is obviously one which has also exercised the minds of those who have put together the English edition of Mao's Selected Works. Both the terms *faze* ("rule") and *yuanze* ("principle") are occasionally translated as "law".²⁰⁸ Mao's usage of the rather old-fashioned expression *tian jing di yi* in referring to certain principles of Marxism has also been translated into English as "law".²⁰⁹ Similarly, the term *guilü* has itself been translated into English as "axiom",²¹⁰ and as "rule",²¹¹ and it is probable that it is Mao's rather flexible usage of the term *guilü* which has led to these disparities.²¹² It would appear, however, that it is safer to apply the consistent

208. SW III, p. 242; XJ III, p. 970; Ji IX, p. 236; also SW II, p. 58; XJ II, p. 355; Ji V, p. 300.

209. SW III, p. 233; XJ III, p. 961; Ji IX, p. 224.

210. SW II, p. 164; XJ II, p. 458.

211. SW II, p. 349; XJ II, p. 635.

212. In his Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism, Mao had in fact suggested that the three different terms "law" (*guilü*), "category" (*fanchou*), and "rule" (*faze*) have the same meaning. See Ji VI, p. 299.

translation of "law" to Mao's use of the Chinese term *guilü*, while bearing in mind the wide range of generalizations that this could encompass, and attempting to discern whether the "law" referred to was a specific "law", or a law of universal validity.

IV. "Sinification of Marxism": The Union of Universal and Particular

Western critiques of Mao's "Sinification of Marxism" have tended to cluster around two lines of interpretation. The first of these suggests that the "Sinification of Marxism" was essentially a function of Mao's "Sinocentrism" and entailed the elevation of Chinese tradition and realities at the expense of Marxism's universal truths.²¹³ The second argues that the "Sinification of Marxism" was a ploy utilized by Mao to enhance his own position in the power struggle with the Returned Students' Faction which had favoured a more orthodox European and Soviet reading of Marxism.²¹⁴ The following analysis will suggest that Mao's "Sinification of Marxism" was neither of these; that it was rather an attempt to establish a formula by which a universal theory

213. See Wylie, The Emergence of Maoism, Op. cit., p. 90; also Wylie, "Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta and the 'Sinification of Marxism...'", Op. cit., pp. 447-80. See also Mark Selden's interpretation in The Yen-an Way in Revolutionary China (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 191. Also Jack Gray, Mao Tse-tung (Guildford and London: Lutterworth Press, 1973), p. 41. Also PTMT, pp. 112-116. Also Hsiung, Op. cit., p. 69. Also Wakeman, Op. cit., p. 229. Post-1960 Soviet assessments have portrayed Mao's "Sinification of Marxism" as a function of his "Great-Han Chauvinism"; see A Critique of Mao Tse-tung's Theoretical Conceptions (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), pp. 70-1.

214. See Robert R. North, Moscow and Chinese Communists (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953, 1963), p. 193; see also Wylie, The Emergence of Maoism, Op. cit., p. 52; and "Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta...", Op. cit., p. 462; see also Stuart Schram, "The Cultural Revolution in Historical Perspective", in Stuart Schram (ed.), Authority Participation and Cultural Change in China (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 17.

such as Marxism could be utilized in a particular national context and culture without abandoning the universality of that theory.²¹⁵

It was stressed in the last section that one of the distinguishing features of Mao's approach to the interpretation of phenomena was his insistence on grasping the regularities which characterize the specific instance; likewise his concomitant distrust of applying supposedly general principles or laws in an indiscriminating manner which ignored such distinguishing regularities at the level of the specific instance. This sensitivity to the importance of grasping the specific manifestation of general principles or laws led Mao almost instinctively to perceive in Marxism a methodology capable of facilitating this quest for comprehension of the particular. In keeping with this position, Mao appears to have been largely uninterested in the actual content of Marx's analyses, and nowhere in the Yan'an writings does there appear any attempt to give a coherent exposition of any of the Marxist classics. This absence of interpretive texts cannot be regarded as accidental, or an oversight due to the exigencies of the war situation. On the contrary, Mao would have regarded the exegesis aimed at elucidating the content of such classics as a singular waste of time, for the utility of such content would be limited by the particularities of the society which had been the object of investigation. This hostility to an uncritical utilisation of the content of the Marxist classics is reflected clearly in a document of 1941 entitled Resolution of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on the Yan'an Cadre School. In this Resolution, Mao's insistence on the separation

215. Parts of this and the preceding section will be published in a forthcoming number of the Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs under the title of "The Form of Mao Zedong's 'Sinification of Marxism'".

of the content of the Marxist classics from their "essence" emerges clearly:

At present the fundamental weakness of the Yan'an cadre school lies in the lack of contact between theory and practice, between what is studied and what is applied, and there exists the serious fault of subjectivism and dogmatism. This fault manifests itself in letting students study a plethora (*dadui*; literally, "large heaps") of abstract Marxist-Leninist principles, and not paying attention (or hardly paying attention) to understanding their essence and how to apply them in the concrete Chinese situation. In order to correct this defect, it must be stressed that the purpose of the study of Marxist-Leninist theory is to enable the student to correctly apply it in the resolution of the practical problems of the Chinese Revolution, and not the ill-digested cramming and recitation of principles found in books. Firstly, we must let students distinguish the words and sentences of Marxism-Leninism from its essence; secondly, we must let the students comprehend this essence...; thirdly, the students must study and gain mastery over applying this essence in China's concrete environment; all formalistic, hollow study is to be abandoned. In order to achieve this purpose, besides teaching Marxist-Leninist theories, education in Chinese history and conditions, and Party history and policy, must be increased.²¹⁶

It is obvious from this quote that Mao's confidence in Marxism had nothing to do with the content of Marx's analyses of a particular mode of production at a particular historical moment. Such content was of a conjunctural status only. It is also important to note that the principles of Marxism-Leninism were perceived by Mao as being "abstract" and not necessarily of immediate relevance or utility in the Chinese context. Mao regarded such abstract principles or laws of Marxism-Leninism as constituted of assertions of the universalized status of certain phenomena. Although Mao implicitly accepted their validity, he did not accept that such assertions of themselves could

216. Ji VIII, p. 43. Emphasis added.

indicate the manner in which such phenomena found manifestation in specific concrete situations. The abstract universal law of class struggle is a good example. Class struggle is a universally existing social phenomenon; it is a characteristic of all societies except the most primitive. However, the Marxist law which asserts the universality of class struggle has nothing to say (Mao would have argued), about the manner in which class struggle within a particular historical and socio-economic context would be made manifest. Thus, this universal law (while deriving initially from observations of numerous specific instances) remained "abstract" in the absence of the application of this law to determine the form it might take within a further specific instance. It is in this sense that Mao could accept the principles of Marxism as being universally valid, while at the same time being "abstract". It is also in this sense that the empiricist element in Mao's thought could co-exist with a confidence in certain over-arching or universal laws and principles.

Mao's conflict with the "dogmatists" within the Chinese Communist Party must be seen as primarily a profound disagreement over this interpretation of Marxism. In contradistinction to Mao, the "dogmatists" believed that the content of Marx's study of the dynamics of Western European capitalism and its resultant class structure and struggle had relevance for the Chinese revolutionary context, despite the dissimilarity of conditions existing in those two contexts. Such content encompassed principles describing the regularities of the particular historical situation which Marx had analyzed. Such principles were not perceived by the "dogmatists" as having only a localised applicability, however, and they tended to regard them as representing the universal truths of Marxism. Mao insisted to the contrary that in

utilising Marx's writings on Europe, it was necessary to abstract a more generalised principle or law from the content in order to allow its application elsewhere. He regarded the process of deriving such universally applicable abstractions or laws as the scientific procedure which permitted the construction of the ultimate level in the inductionist pyramid. By this procedure, Marx's generalisations or "laws" describing specific instances within a category (class struggle in nineteenth century Europe) could be separated from the law which described the category in general or universal terms (class struggle exists in all societies save the most primitive). Marx's generalizations about the class structure in Europe and elsewhere were consequently equivalent for Mao to specific "laws". By abstracting the general principle from such specific "laws", it was possible to derive laws at the highest level of generality, laws which had a universal validity and which were not constrained by any historically or culturally specific content. Therefore, the universal law which asserted the ubiquity of class struggle in all societies except primitive societies would direct attention to the centrality of classes and class struggle within society but could not suggest how class structure or struggle would be made manifest in any particular society at any point in time. The disclosure of the nature of class structure and struggle within such a specific context could result only from an empirical analysis to disclose the specific "laws" of that context.

In Mao's "Sinification" speech of October 1938 (Chapter Seven of On the New Stage), Mao insisted that Marxism was "universally applicable".²¹⁷ It is clear, however, that Mao refused to entertain the notion that the specific principles or "laws" arising from Marx's

217. SW II, p. 208; XJ II, pp. 498-9; Ji VI, p. 259.

analysis of European capitalism possessed universal status, for their relevance was limited by the specific nature of the historical situation from which they had arisen. To isolate the universalising character of Marxism, what was required was this process of abstraction (divorcing principle from content) in which historically limited "laws" could produce universal laws divorced from specific historical limitations. The principles or laws resulting from this process were necessarily "abstract", for they were basically devoid of any content which could restrict their universal validity. The function of such universal laws was to describe the general or universal existence of a certain phenomenon (like class struggle), but not to anticipate the specific form that such a phenomenon might take in any concrete situation or historical moment. It is in this sense that Marxism could be "universally applicable", for it served to direct attention towards such phenomena.

Yet this production of universal laws or abstractions regarding the nature of the world, represented for Mao only the first integer in the total equation which constituted Marxism. The production of such universal laws was not an end in itself, and they had to be utilised to guide investigation of the phenomena they described at an abstract level, at the level of the specific instance. In this way, a universal law could aid in the elucidation of the particular, and only by the union of the two could the universal law cease to be a contentless abstraction. Without application to determine the specific manifestation of the universal law, the universal law necessarily remained "abstract" in that the link between the particular and the general was ruptured. Marxism, as such, could not be abstract in this sense, for Marxism was defined (in Mao's mind) as the unity of the

particular and the universal; the universal being utilized and applied, and given specific form at the level of the particular. The universal premises of Marxism did not represent Marxism *in toto*, but rather one element of a complete ideology. As a complete ideology, Marxism was constituted of universal (or "abstract") laws utilized to disclose "laws" at the level of the particular instance; Marxism would remain incomplete without the union of the universal and particular in this manner. Consequently, when Mao asserted in On the New Stage, "there is no abstract Marxism, only concrete Marxism",²¹⁸ he was indicating that Marxism as a complete ideology was defined by the utilization of its abstractions or universal laws in specific historical circumstances, rather than that there were no abstractions in Marxism at all. Stuart Schram would, by the terms of this analysis, be mistaken in accepting Mao's denial of "abstract Marxism" at face value.²¹⁹ We have seen from the long quote given above that Mao recognized the existence of "abstract Marxist-Leninist principles", and in On the New Stage, Mao asserted "any talk about Marxism in isolation from China's characteristics is merely Marxism in the abstract, Marxism in a vacuum".²²⁰ The function of this "abstract Marxism" was to provide those universally applicable laws which would facilitate the elucidation of the regularities of the particular historical instance. Without these abstractions (its universal laws), an aimless empiricism would be the result; without the application of such universal laws or abstractions to specific concrete situations, the ideology would become a sterile academic exercise. Mao's insistence on the application of the universal laws of

218. Ji VI, p. 261.

219. See PTMTT, pp. 115-6; also Schram, "The Cultural Revolution in ...", in Schram (ed.), Op. cit., p. 16.

220. SW II, p. 209; XJ II, p. 499; Ji VI, p. 261.

Marxism to Chinese conditions was therefore predicated on his own distinctive view of Marxism, rather than on a capricious desire to bend or distort the ideology in favour of China's empirical realities. Mao perceived his view of Marxism as theoretically tenable, and this because of (rather than in spite of) his heavy emphasis on applying the universal principles of Marxism to the actualities of the Chinese revolution and Chinese society.

Marxism's utility did not end, however, with the provision of certain universally applicable abstractions or laws. Mao also perceived in Marxism a methodology whereby such abstractions could be applied to concrete situations; that is, the process of application itself was an integral feature of the total ideology of Marxism. As Mao was to point out in On the New Stage, it was necessary to study "the viewpoint (*lichang*) and methodology with which they (Marx and Lenin) observed and solved problems".²²¹ Mao interpreted this Marxist methodology as having several essential features for the study of society. Firstly, and most importantly, Mao regarded a Marxist methodology as necessitating a consciousness of history which perceived the heavy debt which the present owed the past. Any attempt to grasp the regularities characterizing a particular historical moment would remain superficial and incomplete without a sufficient awareness of the temporally non-discrete nature of the moment under investigation. To comprehend the present, one had to look to the past in an attempt to grasp the manner in which the constituent elements of a particular present were defined by their temporally antecedent generation. In a key passage in On the New Stage, Mao's insistence on the necessity of a consciousness of history is made clear:

221. SW II, p. 209; XJ II, pp. 498-9; Ji VI, p. 259.

Another of our tasks is to study our historical heritage and use the Marxist method to sum it up critically. Our national history goes back several thousand years and has its own characteristics and innumerable treasures. But in these matters we are mere schoolboys. Contemporary China has grown out of the China of the past; we are Marxist in our historical approach (*lishizhuyizhe*) and must not lop off our history. We should sum up our history from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen and take over this valuable legacy. The inheritance of this legacy can also become a method which is of great help in leading the present great movement.²²²

It must be noted firstly, that Mao's call for greater consciousness of China's historical heritage was predicated on the belief that such consciousness was part and parcel of the Marxist method. Moreover, this historical heritage was not to be evaluated by the criteria of traditional Chinese historiography, but by the application of the Marxist method.

Secondly, Mao's deference to history and historical consciousness is reflected in his use of the unusual Chinese term *lishizhuyizhe* (lit; "history-ism-ists"). Mao had also employed this term in his Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism.²²³ Here, as in On the New Stage, Mao employed the term to indicate a consciousness of history which necessitated a cohesive and coherent approach to its study; its use also suggests that analysis of contemporary society can only begin with an awareness of its emergence through time, rather than perceiving society as a static phenomenon owing little or no obligation to the past. In fact, the term elevates the belief in the study of history to the level of a doctrine. It is therefore obvious from what

222. Ji VI, pp. 260-1; PTMTT, p. 172; SW II, p. 209; XJ II, p. 499. The translation used here is a modified form of that found in SW.

223. Ji VI, p. 290.

is implied in the term that it admits of no convenient translation into English. Stuart Schram had rendered it into English as "historicists"; "we are Marxist historicists".²²⁴ The objection to this translation is that, since the publication of Karl Popper's The Poverty of Historicism (1944-45),²²⁵ the notion of "historicism" has taken on serious pejorative overtones to the extent that contemporary Marxists have felt obliged to deny the applicability of the term to Marxism.²²⁶ Although "historicism" may have made quite a good translation in its pre-Popperian sense, the term is now too coloured by Popper's critique of historicism to be attributed to Mao in an assertion of his own position on history.²²⁷ The official translation ("we are Marxist in our historical approach"), while unobjectionable, does not capture the sense implied in the Chinese of a belief in the study of history, suggesting rather merely a methodological stance.

Thirdly, it is instructive that the historical time-span Mao regarded as relevant for a comprehension of contemporary China was well over two millenia ("from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen"). It was a significant feature of the historical conception of many Chinese (not only Mao) that they could retrospect on a history of such vast temporal dimensions, and identify themselves as being part of and emerging from this enormous and unbroken historical conduit. In this

224. See PTMTT, p. 172.

225. The Poverty of Historicism appeared firstly in three parts in the periodical Economica in 1944 and 1945. It was first published in book form in 1957. See the "Historical Note" in K.R. Popper, Op. cit., p. iv.

226. Louis Althusser, for example, has asserted that Marxism is in fact an "anti-historicism"; see Louis Althusser, Reading Capital (London: NLB, 1970), p. 119.

227. Mao continued to regard the concept *lishizhuyi* in a positive sense. Some two decades after writing On the New Stage, Mao was to utilize the term as synonymous with "reason" (*li*); see USW, p. 164; Miscellany I, p. 67; Wansui (1969), p. 105.

instance, Mao was emphasizing the study of this lengthy past in order that the present be more readily and accurately comprehended. Thus, when Mao declared that the inheritance of the Chinese historical legacy "can also become a method", he was asserting, in contradistinction to the "dogmatists", that by placing the present *in situ* historically (that is, perceiving its emergence from a unique and distinctly Chinese historical background), one's sensitivity to the regularities of the historically-determined nature of the present would be enhanced. As such regularities found manifestation within a temporal dimension, awareness of the emergence and historical development of those regularities through time was as important as attempting a structural definition of such regularities within a narrow time-span defined as the present.

Mao also perceived the employment of a Marxist methodology as necessitating an appreciation of the "totality" or entirety of an historical situation. In On the New Stage, Mao identified the lack of this appreciation as being a weakness requiring rectification:

To this day we do not yet understand Japanese imperialism or China in their entirety (*quanbu*). The movement is developing, new things have yet to emerge, and they are emerging in an endless stream. The great lesson to which we must apply ourselves constantly with wide-open eyes is the study of this movement in its totality (*quanmian*) and its development. Whoever refuses this scrupulous and detailed study...is not a Marxist.²²⁸

In On Practice, Mao was to make somewhat clearer what he meant by examining a situation in its entirety:

Only those who are subjective, one-sided and superficial in their approach to problems will

228. Ji VI, pp. 261-2; PTMTT, p. 173; SW II, p. 210; XJ II, p. 500.

smugly issue orders or directives the moment they arrive on the scene, without considering the circumstances, without viewing things in their totality (*quanti*) (their history and their present state as a whole (*quanbu xianzhuang*)) and without getting to the essence of things (their nature and the internal relations between one thing and another).²²⁹

Therefore, to grasp the "totality" of an historical situation encompassed not only comprehending its "present state as a whole", but also its emergence through time to produce that state. Mao argued that to apprehend a situation or phenomenon in its entirety required a movement from one form of knowledge to another; "In order to fully reflect a thing in its totality (*zhengge de shiwu*)...it is necessary to change from perceptual to rational knowledge".²³⁰ He perceived this movement from perceptual to rational knowledge as being equally necessary for a minor process of cognition (knowing a single thing or task) as for a major process of cognition, such as "knowing" an entire society or a revolution.²³¹ Unlike Lukács, however, Mao did not develop his ideas on "totality" to any sophisticated level. His conception of "totality" developed rather in opposition to the "one-sided" (*pianmian*) and "superficial" (*biaomian*) approach which he perceived his opponents within the Party to be employing, and he utilized the notion of "totality" largely as a foil against these analytical inadequacies.

A consciousness of history, and the necessity of apprehending a situation or process in its entirety, represented for Mao two of the major elements whereby the universally applicable abstractions or laws of Marxism could be applied to concrete historical contexts. The third

229. SW I, p. 302; XJ I, p. 266; BZF II, p. 42.

230. SW I, p. 303; XJ I, p. 268; BZF II, p. 43.

231. SW I, p. 304; XJ I, p. 268; BZF II, p. 43.

element in this process of application was the method of class analysis, which Mao regarded as "the fundamental viewpoint of Marxism".²³² Mao perceived the employment of these three methodological features of Marxism as providing the key which would disclose the manner in which the universal manifested itself as regularities within specific and concrete historical instances. It was necessary, through the employment of this application procedure, to seek the universal within the particular. Marxism would remain an incomplete ideological system if the universal and particular were not conjoined in this fashion. Mao could only conceive of Marxism in its application as a finished system. Consequently, Marxism in the Chinese context was constituted of Marxism's universal laws applied in a certain manner to disclose the regularities (or specific "laws") which characterised Chinese society and the Chinese Revolution. Once disclosed, the specific "laws" describing characterising aspects of Chinese society and the Chinese Revolution became (for Mao) an integral part of Marxism within that historically defined situation. It is in this sense that Mao could call for the "Sinification of Marxism", for within that historically defined situation, Marxism could only become complete through its "Sinification":

There is no such thing as abstract Marxism, but only concrete Marxism. What we call concrete Marxism is Marxism that has taken on a national form, that is, Marxism applied to the concrete struggle in the concrete conditions prevailing in China, and not Marxism abstractly used. If a Chinese Communist, who is part of the great Chinese people... talks of Marxism apart from Chinese peculiarities, this Marxism is merely an empty abstraction. Consequently, the Sinification of Marxism--that is to say, making certain that in all its manifestations it is imbued with Chinese peculiarities, using it according to these peculiarities--becomes a problem that must be

232. SW III, p. 11; XJ III, p. 747; Ji VII, p. 289.

understood and solved by the whole Party without delay.²³³

From this perspective, the "Sinification of Marxism" was not a question of the elevation of Chinese realities at the expense of ideology, but the completion of Marxism as an ideological system. Inherent in Mao's "Sinification of Marxism" is the notion that Marxism as a complete ideological system (rather than just a series of universal laws or abstractions) is definable only within a concrete historical context, and this because there is in Marxism a necessary union between the universal and the regularities (or specific "laws") of the particular to which the universal laws draw attention. Thus, although the "Sinification of Marxism" is, as Wylie claims, a "culturally charged term",²³⁴ it does not claim cultural privilege over Marxism. Within a different cultural or historical context, the universal laws would need be conjoined with the regularities (specific "laws") characteristic of that unique situation. Because these regularities would be different from those of the Chinese context, that particular Marxism would differ accordingly. Both nevertheless would share a common stock of universal laws. Mao was to repeat, in On New Democracy (1940), this necessity for a union between the universal truths of Marxism and the regularities characterising the Chinese situation:

...in applying Marxism to China, Chinese Communists must fully and properly integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, or in other words, the universal truth of Marxist must be combined with specific national characteristics and acquire a definite national form if it is to be useful, and in no circumstances can it be applied subjectively as a mere formula.²³⁵

233. PTMTT, P. 172; Ji VI, p. 261; SW II, p. 209; XJ II, pp. 499-500.

234. Wylie, The Emergence of Maoism, Op. cit., p. 52.

235. SW II, pp. 380-1; XJ II, p. 667; Ji VII, p. 202. Emphasis added.

Here again, the emphasis was on Marxism as finding completion, (and through this completion, utility) by its integration within an historically and culturally specific setting.

This view of Marxism led logically to an insistence on the need for close attention to the particular characteristics of Chinese society and history. Mao was to return to this point again and again in subsequent writings of the Yan'an period, and he made no attempt to conceal his impatience with those Marxists who were preoccupied with foreign models and history to the exclusion of Chinese history and conditions. He perceived this preoccupation as largely a manifestation of an incorrect interpretation of Marxism, one which regarded the content and historically specific "laws" of a largely European form of Marxism as having relevance within the Chinese context. In Reform Our Study (1941), Mao isolated three conditions having deleterious effect within the Chinese Communist Party; the study of current conditions was being neglected, as were the study of history and the application of Marxism-Leninism. For Mao, these failings represented a manifestation of an incorrect interpretation of Marxism, and his critique of them was inspired by his view of Marxism which insisted on the integration of Marxism's universal laws with the specific "laws" which described the regularities characterising China as a particular historical instance, that integration only being possible through a detailed investigation and close knowledge of current conditions and Chinese history. Mao believed that Marxists labouring under a dogmatic misinterpretation of Marxism were guilty of "subjectivism", a title intended to indicate divorce from reality and a preoccupation with theory for its own sake:

With this attitude, a person does not make a systematic and thorough study of the environment, but works by sheer subjective enthusiasm and has a blurred picture of the face of China today. With this attitude, he mutilates (*geduan*) history, knows only Greece but not China, and is completely in the dark about the China of yesterday and the day before yesterday. With this attitude, a person studies the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin in the abstract and without any aim, not inquiring what connection they may have to the Chinese Revolution. He goes to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin not to seek the standpoints and methods with which to study the theoretical and tactical problems but to study theory purely for theory's sake.²³⁶

During the *Zhengfeng* movement of 1942-44, there was a heavy emphasis on eradicating this "subjectivism", and the *Zhengfeng* documents indicate a general preoccupation with disclosing the distinguishing characteristics (the specific "laws") of the Chinese Revolution and Chinese society and the necessity for formulating policies in line with those characteristics. It is not only documents written by Mao during this period which reflect this preoccupation. Liu Shaoqi, for example, in discussing intra-Party struggle, delineated the historical features which distinguished the formation and development of the Chinese Communist Party from the Bolsheviks under Lenin.²³⁷ Similarly, Chen Yun (echoing Mao) asserted the necessity of grasping the essence of Marxism-Leninism rather than perceiving it as dogma, and emphasized the necessity of studying Chinese history and the current political situation in China.²³⁸ In fact, the articles by Mao's lieutenants at this time suggest a marked degree of ideological congruence amongst a significant section of Party leadership over the question of the need for the "Sinification of Marxism". There is no doubt that

236. SW III, p. 21; XJ III, p. 757; Ji VII, p. 320.

237. PRD, pp. 197-8.

238. PRD, p. 106.

many intellectuals within the Party (and especially Chen Boda) had been arriving independently at the conclusion that a new ideological direction was necessary in the Party's policy on Marxist interpretation.²³⁹

It is evident that they perceived in the explicit call for the "Sinification of Marxism" a radical departure from the mode of Marxist interpretation utilized by the Returned Students' Faction. Mao's interpretation of Marxism was regarded as theoretically defensible by such intellectuals and Party leaders precisely because of its heavy emphasis on Chinese history and conditions. It could not by any stretch of the imagination be regarded, therefore, as an uncritical reassertion of orthodox Soviet Marxism. It is consequently somewhat difficult to credit Compton's assertion that the "attack on dogmatism and the plea for a sinified theory were orthodox in every way", and that the *Zhengfeng* documents could be characterized as a "wholesale adoption of ideas and methods which were not Chinese".²⁴⁰

Zhengfeng must be seen as a move to gain Party-wide acceptance of the "Sinification of Marxism" (as Mao perceived it), a formulation which had found acceptance amongst an important section of Party leaders and intellectuals since 1938, but not having wide audience amongst rank and file cadres. This formulation regarded Marxism as abstract and therefore incomplete without its union with the particular characteristics of Chinese society and the Chinese revolution. The form of Marxism advocated by Mao could thus hardly be orthodox, for Marxism could only find complete definition within a concrete historical setting; Chinese Marxism, although necessarily sharing the universal truths of Marxism, was characterized by those regularities of China

239. Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 48-52.

240. PRD, pp. xlii-xliii.

as a particular historical situation. As a complete ideological system, then, it could not but differ from Soviet Marxism.

In On the New Stage, Mao had asserted that Marxism had to be regarded as a guide to action. He returned to this theme frequently in the *Zhengfeng* documents, and it represented the major theme of his key-note speech originally entitled Reform in Learning, the Party and Literature (1942):

Our comrades must understand that we do not study Marxism-Leninism because it is pleasing to the eye, or because it has some mystical value...Marxism-Leninism has no beauty, nor has it any mystical value. It is only extremely useful...Marx, Lenin, and Stalin have repeatedly said, "Our doctrine is not dogma; it is a guide to action". ...Theory and practice can be combined only if men of the Chinese Communist Party take the standpoints, concepts, and methods of Marxism-Leninism, apply them to China, and create a theory from conscientious research on the realities of the Chinese Revolution and Chinese history.²⁴¹

We have seen that, for Mao, Sinified Marxism represented a union between Marxism's universal laws and the specific "laws" which described the characterising regularities of the Chinese historical context. How did he perceive this ideology as a "guide to action"? It must be stressed that this ideological system did not contain within it the formulae for automatic and necessarily correct responses to the various political, economic or military contingencies which might arise in the course of revolution. The function of the ideology was to facilitate as accurate an interpretation of the historical context as was possible. From this information the political actor would then be in a position to take judicious action commensurate

241. SW III, p. 43; XJ III, p. 778; Ji VIII, p. 75.

with the objective limitations of the situation as outlined by the ideology. The action could only be regarded as appropriate in its conception (rather than as necessarily correct) for there could be no formula for "correct" action implicit in the information provided. Having a clear and hopefully accurate picture of the parameters of the situation and its characterising regularities would act as a guide to action by ruling out inappropriate responses, and presenting certain actions as preferable, or perhaps obvious. Here again, the influence of the inductive method is revealed in Mao's method of formulating historical responses; under no circumstances could one arbitrarily formulate strategy or tactics *a priori*, but only via a careful analysis of the regularities of the historically specific situation. One had always to work "upwards" from the facts rather than attempting to impose a predetermined blue-print for action on reality. In Reform Our Study, Mao was to indicate clearly the necessity of employing an inductive approach in searching for an appropriate strategy or policy; "Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have taught us that we should proceed from objective realities and that we should derive laws from them to serve as a basis for our actions".²⁴²

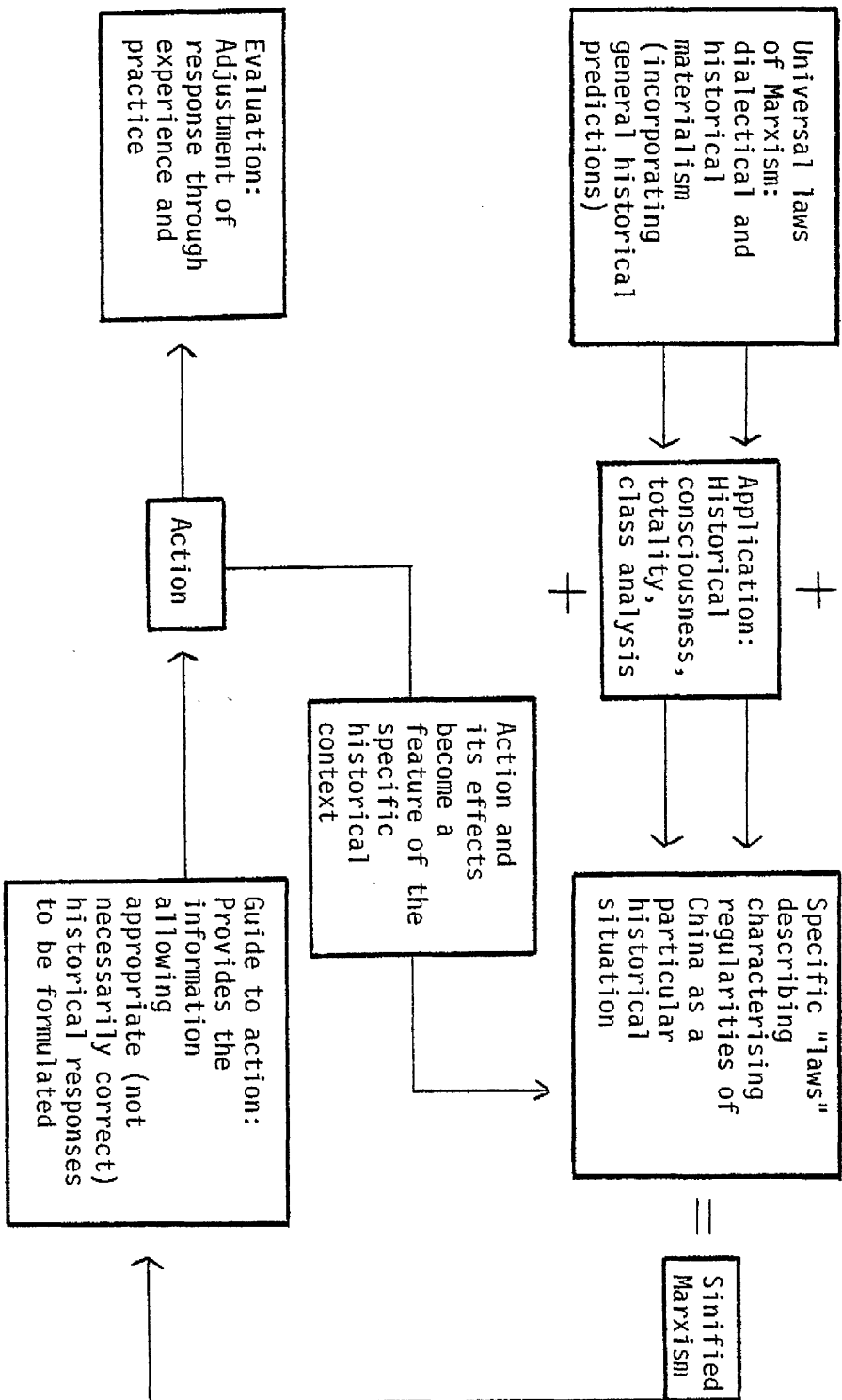
It is in this context that Mao's theory of practice finds relevance. Ideology could only serve as a guide to action by presenting an accurate assessment of the historical situation or process. It was up to the political actor, utilizing direct and indirect experience, and taking full cognizance of the regularities (specific "laws") of the situation, to draw the necessary inferences and formulate an appropriate response accordingly. Such a response could not be regarded as "correct" in advance of its implementation, only as appropriate. The

242. SW III, p. 21; XJ III, p. 757; Ji VII, p. 320.

only method of ascertaining whether the seemingly appropriate action was correct was by performing the action and evaluating its results. If there was an equivalence between intention and result, then the action and the interpretation upon which it was based were indeed correct; otherwise the disparity between intention and result served to indicate either faulty analysis of the situation, or correct analysis with formulation of seemingly appropriate but incorrect response. Only by thus engaging reality could experience be gained and action refined so that the gap between the seemingly appropriate and the correct response could be minimised.

In conclusion, it appears that for Mao, Marxism was a complex ideological system constituted of various elements and only capable of finding complete definition within an historically specific setting. I have attempted to demonstrate that Mao's "Sinification of Marxism" was not the subordination of ideology to Chinese reality or culture; nor was it merely a clever tactical move in the power struggle with the Returned Students' Faction. It was a function rather of Mao's perception that the universal laws of Marxism did not represent Marxism as a complete ideological system, and that for this completion, such universal laws had necessarily to be united with the specific "laws" which described the regularities characterising China as a particular historical situation. Mao believed that this union of the universal and the particular allowed the completion of the Marxist system, and created a genuinely Chinese Marxism which did not detract from the universal status of Marxism as a theory of history and society.

FIGURE 6: Mao's Zedong's "Sinification of Marxism"



CHAPTER THREECivil War and Consolidation: 1946-54

At the Seventh Party Congress of May 1945, the "Thought of Mao Zedong" was enshrined as the Party's ideological orthodoxy, its "only correct guiding theory and its only correct general line".¹ This act of enshrinement was to represent the consummation of the struggle by Mao and his adherents to supplant, both ideologically and organizationally, the influence of the Returned Students' Faction within the Party. In retrospect, it appears to have represented also the termination of a significant chapter in Mao's own intellectual development. For while the texts of the Yan'an period disclose a mind in restless pursuit of a theory that could be simultaneously both genuinely Marxist and Chinese, the documents of the Civil War and the early years of the People's Republic reveal a preoccupation, not with such larger questions of theory, but with the mechanics of directing the military operation of an extensive civil war and the subsequent task of salvaging and consolidating an economy devastated by the impact of that war. In terms of military strategy, Mao's direction of the civil war (as this is disclosed in the documents of the years 1946-49) represented a practical application of military theories formulated in their most complete form in the early Yan'an period; consequently, little that is theoretically innovative emerges during the Civil War period. Likewise, in terms of economic development, the insistence during the years of consolidation on pursuing a policy of "leaning to one side" was an important factor inhibiting Mao's more natural inclination to formulate policies tailored to the

1. M & A, p. 260.

regularities defining the Chinese context and China's own particular developmental needs;² that task had to await the mid-1950s, at which time Mao began to seriously question the validity of the Soviet model for Chinese conditions. Mao was, as a result of these military and economic imperatives, to devote only sparing attention during the period of civil war and consolidation to the problems which are the focus of this study. In fact, for those interested in these aspects of Mao's thought, the documents of this period make, with some few exceptions, disappointing reading.

Notable amongst such exceptions are the documents of August and September 1949 which contain Mao's response to the China White Paper issued by the United States' Department of State.³ The purported aim of this lengthy American White Paper was to provide an objective analysis and documentation of China-United States relations, with

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2. Mao was to stress the need for reliance on the Soviet experience in his article of 30 June 1949 entitled On the People's Democratic Dictatorship:

At first some of the Soviet Communists also were not very good at handling economic matters and the imperialists awaited their failure too. But the Communist Party of the Soviet Union emerged victorious and, under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, it learned not only how to make the revolution but also how to carry on construction. It has built a great and splendid socialist state. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is our best teacher and we must learn from it. (SW IV, p. 423; XJ IV, p. 1370; Ji X, pp. 306-7).

Ron Keith has argued, however, that this emphasis on the borrowing of Soviet experience has to be qualified by an appreciation that Chinese leadership already possessed many years of experience of economic administration from the period of the Border Government, and that this tended to modify the wholesale adoption of Soviet techniques and methods. See "The Relevance of Border-Region Experience to Nation-Building in China, 1949-52", China Quarterly 78 (June 1979), pp. 274-295.

3. United States Relations with China with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949, Department of State Publication 3573: Far Eastern Series 30. This document was reissued under the title The China White Paper with an unpaginated introduction by Lyman P. Van Slyke, by the Stanford University Press at Stanford in 1967; hereafter CWP.

special attention being paid to the period of the Civil War itself; it was also manifestly designed, however, to constitute a justification for what was widely regarded in America as the failure of the Democratic administration to maintain Nationalist rule on the mainland of China and to contain the forces of Chinese communism. It was consequently widely and bitterly attacked within the United States. Mao's reaction to this White Paper was equally hostile. It is probable, however, that his familiarity with its contents did not extend much past the controversial Letter of Transmittal penned by the then Secretary of State, Dean Acheson. As Lyman P. Van Slyke has pointed out, although the Chinese Communists were to make the White Paper the centre of their first mass anti-American campaign, they did not find it necessary or desirable to translate the White Paper itself, but concentrated almost entirely on Acheson's Letter of Transmittal.⁴ There is no doubt that this Letter of Transmittal constituted the most controversial and overtly justificatory document of the entire White Paper,⁵ and Mao himself was to assert, in a section subsequently deleted from the Selected Works, that he regarded the Letter of Transmittal as its most important feature (*yaodian*).⁶ Mao's own critique of the White Paper in fact concentrated almost exclusively on rebutting arguments raised by Acheson who, in attempting to exonerate American handling of its China policy, had invoked certain prominent causal factors of Chinese history to explain American inability to resist or deflect the historical impulses and effects which those factors had brought into play. Mao objected strongly not only to the causal significance of the factors raised by

4. Van Slyke, Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ji X, p. 335.

Acheson to explain the Chinese Revolution, but also to the underlying assumptions which the selection of those factors presumed. In all, Mao was to devote five rather polemical articles to an attack on the White Paper in general and Acheson's mode of historical interpretation in particular. In attacking and rejecting Acheson's position, Mao was obliged to reveal something of his own position on the causal significance of the historical factors raised by Acheson. Consequently, Mao's critique is of obvious interest for purposes of this study.

Mao's hostility to Acheson's analysis of the causes of the Chinese Revolution stemmed largely from his view that any interpretation of history at odds with his own was necessarily contrary to historical materialism, and therefore *ipso facto* a brand of idealist thought. As a result, he was particularly incensed by Acheson's neglect of the role that class relations and antagonisms had played as causal historical agents in the initiation and development of the Chinese Revolution. During the Yan'an period, Mao had perceived such attention to class analysis as the "fundamental viewpoint of Marxism",⁷ and that which distinguished historical materialism as the only valid interpretation of history. By focusing attention on the role of class and class struggle in this historical process, historical materialism had isolated the causal mechanism whereby societal activity found generation and development. In the first of his articles on the White Paper entitled Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle, Mao was to reiterate his belief in the centrality of class and class struggle in the unfolding of the historical drama, and to stress the consequent necessity for the interpretation of history to take this feature as its point of departure:

7. SW III, p. 11; XJ III, p. 747; Ji VII, p. 289.

Class struggle, some classes triumph, others are eliminated. Such is history, such is the history of civilization for thousands of years. To interpret history from this viewpoint is historical materialism; standing in opposition to this viewpoint is historical idealism.⁸

However, rather than taking class analysis as its point of departure, Acheson's interpretation isolated two other major factors as the primary causal agencies which had created the historical conditions in which the revolution had flourished. The first of these factors was over-population. As Acheson pointed out, the population of China had doubled during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and this had created enormous pressure on China's limited area of arable land. This pressure had led to the inability of successive Chinese governments to adequately fulfill their primary obligation of ensuring that the population was adequately fed, an inability compounded in recent years by the inability (or unwillingness) of the Nationalist government to implement a meaningful land reform programme which would have eased the pressure on the land. "In no small measure", Acheson concluded, "the predicament in which the National Government finds itself today is due to its failure to provide China with enough to eat".⁹ The second factor indicated by Acheson as giving rise to revolution in China was the impact of the West and of Western ideas on Chinese culture. The introduction of new ideas and the highly developed technology of the West to a culture previously isolated from such influences "played an important part in stimulating ferment and unrest".¹⁰ The combination of these new ideas and over-population was to "set in motion that chain of events which can be

8. SW IV, p. 428; XJ IV, p. 1376; Ji X, p. 321.

9. CWP, pp. iv-v.

10. Ibid., p. v.

called the Chinese revolution".¹¹

Mao's response to Acheson's attribution of causation to these two factors is contained in an article subsequently published under the title The Bankruptcy of the Idealist Conception of History.¹² In this article, Mao without equivocation rejected the notion that overpopulation had been a decisive historical factor in the causation of the Chinese revolution. Indeed, he extended his rejection of Acheson's theory of overpopulation to question whether this factor had ever been a primary causal agent in any of the revolutions that world history had witnessed. Mao perceived in this invocation of the overpopulation factor a resurrection of the Malthusian notion that history was largely determined by the propensity of a population to increase more rapidly than its means of subsistence, this leading ineluctably to the wars and famines which represented the historical mechanisms which kept population growth in check. This was, he believed, an "absurd argument", one which had been refuted not only by Marxist theory, but by the experience of both the Soviet Union and the Border Regions during the anti-Japanese War. In each historical instance of revolution cited by Mao, "oppression and exploitation" of a class nature, rather than overpopulation, were raised as the factors preeminently responsible for creating the conditions for revolution. The failure of a society to provide adequate food and employment for its population was not a function of overpopulation as such, but a function of a class structure which militated against the maximum development of the potential of that society's productive

11. Ibid.

12. SW IV, pp. 451-459; XJ IV, pp. 1398-1406; Ji X, pp. 345-354. The original title of this article was "The Sixth Critique of the White Paper".

capacity and an equitable distribution of the resources thereby produced. The manifestations of the so-called "overpopulation" factor within society (famine, unemployment, disease, and so on) were thus deleterious effects of its class structure, results rather than causes of the instability and antagonism which characterized a society divided into hostile class formations. Consequently, Mao could argue that the resolution of class antagonism through revolution in China and the subsequent rapid development of her productive capacity would demonstrate that she was indeed capable of providing adequately for a large and growing population maintaining a high level of culture; this fact would disprove the notion that China had been "overpopulated", or that her level of population had initiated her revolution. "We believe that revolution can change everything", Mao asserted, "and that before long there will arise a new China with a big population and a great wealth of products, where life will be abundant and culture will flourish. All pessimistic views are utterly groundless".¹³

While Mao's rejection of Acheson's invocation of a "Malthusian" interpretation of the Chinese Revolution stemmed primarily from his deep conviction in the centrality of class and class struggle within the historical process, it appears evident from this article that the populist impulse in his thinking was also incompatible with such a view of history. As in the Yan'an period, the concept of "the people" within Mao's thought did not assume an undifferentiated entity and was therefore not necessarily incompatible with a class approach to

13. SW IV, p. 454; XJ IV, p. 1401; Ji X, pp. 348-9.

the interpretation of history.¹⁴ It was, however, incompatible with a view of history that attributed the deleterious features of society to an increase in the size of "the people"; such a view necessarily devalued "the people" who were, in Mao's opinion, the creators of history. This Mao could not tolerate; not only did the people have to suffer from the ills of class society, but were in Acheson's interpretation being made the scape-goat for those ills as well. Mao's response to redress this seemingly unjust indictment was instinctive:

Of all things in the world, people (*ren*) are the most precious. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, as long as there are people (*ren*), every kind of miracle can be performed.¹⁵

While Mao's deference to the creative potential of the people is here qualified by the insistence on correct leadership, it remains evident that he perceived the people as constituting the historical medium through which any major transformation of society was brought to fruition. To imply that there were too many people (as Mao believed Acheson had) was to ignore the fact that it was the ordinary people who could and had changed the invidious conditions wrought by class society, and who possessed the potential to create the conditions for the final abolition of classes. It was therefore illogical from Mao's perspective to perceive a growth in population, in the size of the people, as constituting a negative feature of history.

14. Mao was, in fact, to give one of his clearest definitions of the class composition of "the people" during this period:

Who are the people? At the present stage in China, they are the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. (SW IV, p. 417; XJ IV, p. 1364; Ji X, p. 299)

15. SW IV, p. 454; XJ IV, p. 1401; Ji X, p. 348.

While Mao was to continue to regard the Malthusian view of history as incorrect during the 1950s and 1960s,¹⁶ his pronouncements on population and birth control do indicate something of a shift from his 1949 position. For example, in February 1957, he asserted "Our large population is a good thing, but of course it involves certain difficulties".¹⁷ Yet, later in that same year, Mao declared "as far as procreation is concerned, the human race has been in a state of total anarchy and has failed to exercise control".¹⁸ And by 1962, Mao was invoking the largeness of China's population coupled with her economic backwardness to explain her inability to effect a "tremendous expansion of the productive forces".¹⁹ It would seem therefore that Mao was to come to have second thoughts about the possible influence that population size might have on the development of society. However, Mao's 1949 position was one of implacable opposition to any suggestion that size of population (and especially over-population) might be a major causal factor in creating revolution and change.

Mao's response to the second factor raised by Acheson in explanation of the Chinese Revolution, namely the influence of Western ideas in creating "ferment and unrest", was to argue that ideas as such have no historical effectivity in the absence of appropriate social conditions in which those ideas could gain relevance and utility. Many Western ideas introduced into China had been

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16. See for example USW, p. 167; Miscellany I, p. 69; Wansui (1969), p. 107.
 17. SW V, p. 407; XJ V, p. 387.
 18. SW V, p. 488; XJ V, p. 471.
 19. TEWC, p. 20; ZKDDZY, p. 21; MTU, p. 174-5; Wansui (1969), p. 413. For other references to population and birth control in Mao's writings of the fifties and sixties, see SW V, p. 487, 512; XJ V, p. 469, p. 494; also USW, p. 76; Wansui (1969), pp. 97-8; also Miscellany I, p. 123; Wansui (1969), p. 225; also COSE, pp. 53, 125-7; Miscellany II, pp. 261, 313; Wansui (1967), pp. 184, 246; Wansui (1969), pp. 335, 398; also Wansui (1969), p. 523.

irrelevant and devoid of utility precisely because they were incompatible with the realities of Chinese conditions. Ideas, as such, could not cause revolutions; to believe that they could was, Mao argued (in a sentence subsequently deleted from the Selected Works) "a typical case (*dianxing*) of historical idealism".²⁰ Ideas could only assume a degree of historical effectivity in those social conditions in which their relevance was apparent, and then only when those ideas were grasped by human beings and translated into action. It was for this reason that Marxism-Leninism had constituted an ideological agency for change whereas other Western ideas had not; the ideas espoused by Marxism-Leninism when conjoined with the regularities defining the Chinese context were of relevance to China's conditions and had been perceived as such by Chinese and acted upon:

The reason why Marxism-Leninism has played such a great role in China since its introduction is that China's social conditions call for it, that it has been linked with the actual practice of the Chinese people's revolution and that the Chinese people have grasped it. Any ideology--even the very best, even Marxism-Leninism itself--is ineffective unless it is linked with objective realities, meets objectively existing needs and has been grasped by the masses of the people. We are historical materialists, opposed to historical idealism.²¹

In attacking Acheson's interpretation of the factors leading to the Chinese Revolution, Mao in fact added little that was original or theoretically innovative to his position of the Yan'an period. By typecasting Acheson's position as "historical idealism", Mao made rebuttal an easy matter, for rather than providing a realistic assessment of the factors invoked by Acheson, he tended to employ

20. Ji X, p. 349; cf. SW IV, p. 454; XJ IV, pp. 1401-2.

21. SW IV, p. 457; XJ IV, p. 1404. The official version varies somewhat from the original text; see Ji X, p. 352.

Acheson as a straw-man against whom he juxtaposed a view of history which he assumed to be safely within the confines of historical materialism; this view emphasised class factors (exploitation and oppression) as progenitive of the revolutionary situation, and made the assumption that ideas can gain historical effectivity only under social conditions appropriate to their deployment. The type of analysis employed to counter Acheson's position is not rigorous, and one can perceive in the five articles on the White Paper rather more polemic than precision. Their function as a spear-head to a mass campaign then being launched indicates that their purpose was probably concerned less with a systematic espousal of historical materialism (as Mao defined it), than with creating an atmosphere of hostility towards American actions in China. Nevertheless, the appearance of the White Paper did prompt Mao into a reassertion of the primacy of class and class struggle as the principle causal factors in historical development, and that he perceived an analysis of these factors as central in isolating cause and effect in the historical process. Because Acheson had not utilized such an approach, his claim to have isolated causality in the development of the Chinese Revolution was in Mao's view a spurious one, as shown by his inability to demonstrate (to Mao's satisfaction) a necessary relationship between the agencies indicated as causal and the presumed historical effect:

Up to this point, Acheson, like a bourgeois professor lecturing on a tedious text, has pretended to trace the causes and effects of events in China. Revolution occurred in China, first, because of overpopulation and, second, because of the stimulus of Western ideas. You see, he appears to be a champion of the theory of causation. But in what follows, even this bit of tedious and phoney theory of

causation disappears, and one finds only a mass of inexplicable events.²²

The chain of cause and effect in historical development could only be unravelled by the employment of class analysis, and only through such a methodology could such factors as the historical effectivity of ideas, and the manifestations of an apparent over-population, be put into proper historical perspective. To utilize any other approach was, from Mao's point of view, to adopt an "idealist" conception of history.

Our analysis of the texts of the Yan'an period disclosed that Mao rarely employed the concept of economic base and superstructure in either expositions of theory or in his own analysis of past or contemporary social activity. Rather, he was inclined to perceive society as being divided into three elements or regions; "economics", "politics", and "culture". Moreover, it was to the combination of the first of these two ("economics" and "politics") to form a social "basis", that Mao was to attribute dominance in the determination of the form and function of society's "culture". This tendency to perceive a tripartite division in social structure and function, and the attribution of primacy to a composite social "basis", represented an attempt to bypass the reductionism and determinism which could emanate from an excessive concentration on economic factors alone as preeminent in historical causation. It would appear that the conceptualization he arrived at permitted a greater degree of effectivity to political activity and organization, although the effectivity of any element of society to either initiate or carry through historical actions was facilitated or limited by the characteristic

22. SW IV, p. 458; XJ IV, p. 1405; Ji X, p. 354.

of the inter-relatedness of society, the restraint of inter-relatedness providing the objective framework within which a political action was carried out.

Mao's disinclination to employ a bifurcated conceptualization of society as constituted of base and superstructure persisted throughout the Civil War period. It is not, indeed, until May of 1951 that such a schema emerges in Mao's writings, and then only briefly and in a form which indicates that the conceptualization had yet to solidify in Mao's thinking. In an editorial written for the People's Daily entitled "Pay Serious Attention to the Discussion of the Film The Life of Wu Hsun", he invoked the notion of a base and superstructure, but his employment of it raises echoes of his Yan'an position:

The question raised by The Life of Wu Hsun is fundamental in nature. A fellow like Wu Hsun, living as he did towards the end of the Ch'ing Dynasty in an era of great struggle by the Chinese people against foreign aggressors and domestic reactionary feudal rulers, did not lift a finger against the feudal economic base or its superstructure...Our writers do not bother...to find out what new economic formations (*jingji wingtai*) of society, new class forces, new personalities and ideas emerged in China during the century and more since the Opium War of 1840 in the struggle against the old economic formations and their superstructures (politics, culture, etc) before they decide what to commend and praise, what not to, and what to oppose.²³

Although it is difficult to make a detailed analysis of so brief a document, several points do arise from an examination of this text. Firstly, although Mao does utilize a base/superstructure conceptualization, the tripartite division of society (economics, politics, culture) has not completely disappeared. What is of especial interest is the fact that politics, previously united with economics

23. SW V, pp. 57-8; XJ V, pp. 46-7; see also Current Background, No. 113 (1 September, 1951), pp. 4-5.

(in the On New Democracy formulation) to form the social "basis", is once again united (as in On Contradiction) with culture to represent the superstructure of society. Although we are given no indication here as to the definition of these elements of society, it would appear that Mao was beginning to favour the formulation initially raised in On Contradiction. As we shall see, Mao was to increasingly favour this base/superstructure formulation in the post-1955 period, and it is possible that this document of 1951 presaged this later change in emphasis.²⁴ Secondly, it is worth noting that Mao once again indicates a vertical differentiation in social composition; the indication of a feudal economic base and superstructure opposed by "new economic formations of society, new class forces, (and) new personalities and ideas" is a clear reassertion of the Yan'an position that the social system was characterized by vertical cleavages which separated the economic, political and cultural structures and functions characteristic of one mode of production from those of another. A feudal economic base gave rise to its own (feudal) superstructure, alongside which developed an economic base characteristic of a new mode of production, and which gave rise to its own superstructure. This conceptualization had, during the Yan'an period, indicated that Mao perceived a complex web of interaction and interrelationship between the different elements of the various competing and coexisting modes of production in an economically heterogeneous society. The formulation raised in this document of 1951 suggests that he continued to perceive the flow of causation

24. The dating of this May 1951 document may be significant in this change in emphasis. It is possible that Mao was, about this time, occupied with the revision of On Contradiction for republication, and that consequently the formulation utilized in that document was once more brought to his attention.

within society as pursuing such a potentially complex pattern.²⁵ While it might be true that a given base (or "basis") within society was causally and temporally antecedent to its own superstructure (or "culture"),²⁶ the possible route that historical influence might describe was complicated by the possible existence of other bases and their superstructures, each of which was in a state of dynamic interaction with the other. It would seem probable that Mao considered the elucidation of the causal significance of any element to be the subject of a concrete analysis, although his views of the Yan'an period indicate that he perceived the culture (or perhaps superstructure) of an emergent and progressive economic mode of production as capable of exerting greater historical influence than its opposite number of a formerly dominant but now declining "basis" (or base).

Mao's position on historical time and the future during the period 1946-54 indicates something of a shift from the fervent eschatological anticipation of the period of the Anti-Japanese War. While there is something of a diminution in that eschatological impulse (a diminution made virtually complete in the 1955-64 period), he continued to evoke a picture of the future in terms of the Chinese visionary conception of *da tong*, or a world of Great Harmony. Although Mao had, during the Yan'an period, raised a conception based on the premise of *da tong* as the future goal of the development of society, his references to the possible attainment of such a society in the post-Yan'an period are heavily qualified by the invocation of a reasoning

25. SW IV, p. 54; XJ IV, p. 1055.

26. The causal and temporal antecedence of economics over culture emerges SW V, p. 18; XJ V, p. 6; "An upsurge in economic construction is bound to be followed by an upsurge of construction in the cultural sphere".

based on logical necessity in which the elimination of classes is stressed as its anterior condition. It is possible to perceive in the emphasis on this qualification, not only a lessening of that eschatological impulse, but a reassertion of a strictly Marxist premise for the attainment of such a society of universal harmony, this latter functioning in some ways as a justification for the former, the continued existence of classes being indicated as a reason for the non-consummation of the eschatological vision raised during the ordeals of the Anti-Japanese War. In his important article of June 1949 entitled On the People's Democratic Dictatorship, Mao was to return again and again to the elimination of classes as a premise for the abolition of all the negative manifestations to which the division of society into classes had given rise:

When classes disappear, all instruments of class struggle--parties and the state machinery--will lose their function, cease to be necessary, therefore gradually wither away and end their historical mission; and human society will move to a higher stage...the road to the abolition of classes, to the abolition of state power and to the abolition of parties is the road all mankind must take; it is only a question of time and conditions.²⁷

Yet, while Mao may have (by invoking a form of logical necessity in which the attainment of a society free of the oppression of the state and other manifestations of class rule was contingent upon the elimination of classes) been disillusioning premature expectations of an early attainment of the truly communist society, it is evident from this passage that Mao's optimism in history remained undiluted. That human society would "move to a higher stage" was prescribed by the fact that the communist society was an historically necessary

27. SW IV, p. 411; XJ IV, p. 1357; Ji X, p. 291.

stage in the development of society. For Mao, it was only "a question of time and conditions" before "classes, state power and political parties will die out very naturally and mankind will enter the realm of Great Harmony (*da tong*)".²⁸ The utilization of the notion of *da tong* to categorize the society which would follow the elimination of classes emerges several times in this document. In each case, however, its emergence is predicated on the prior elimination of classes:

Bourgeois democracy has given way to people's democracy under the leadership of the working class and the bourgeois republic to the people's republic. This has made it possible to achieve socialism and communism through the people's republic, to abolish classes and enter the world of Great Harmony (*shijie de da tong*).²⁹

And further on:

...China can develop steadily, under the leadership of the working class and the Communist Party, from an agricultural into an industrial country and from a new-democratic into a socialist and communist society, can abolish classes and realize the Great Harmony.³⁰

It is possible in fact that Mao subsequently felt that he had overstressed the notion of *da tong* to characterize this future state of society, for several references to it are excised from the version of this document subsequently included in the Selected Works.³¹ Nevertheless, it is clear he continued to perceive that there was a final goal towards which the historical development of society was

28. SW IV, p. 412; XJ IV, p. 1358; Ji X, p. 292.

29. SW IV, p. 414; XJ IV, p. 1360; Ji X, p. 295.

30. SW IV, p. 418; XJ IV, pp. 1364-5; Ji X, p. 300.

31. Ji X, pp. 295, 301.

directed, and that the attainment of this final society would usher in a period of harmony in which the divisiveness and antagonisms of class society would cease to operate. To the extent that Mao continued to embrace a belief in the possible realization of such a society, his historical perspective was still marked by an eschatological vision of the future. However, the fact that the possible realization of such a society was no longer imminent (as it appears to have been in the writings of the Yan'an period), and its attainment closely qualified by an insistence on the previous elimination of classes, suggests a significant diminution of that eschatological impulse in Mao's thinking. As we shall see, the notion of a future society premised on a Chinese conception of harmony and peace was to virtually disappear from Mao's view of the future in the post-cooperativization period. Consequently, the diminution of this impulse during the years 1946-54 would indicate that this period represented a transition in Mao's views on this subject, from the imminent expectation of the millenium raised during Yan'an days to the views of the post-1955 period in which his perception of the ubiquity of contradictions precluded the possibility of a settled society of peace and harmony unscathed by conflict.

There is little reference to the problem of historical periodization in the documents of this period. However, what comment does exist suggests an invocation of a Marxist periodization of history which is solidly orthodox. In On the Draft Constitution of the People's Republic of China (June 1954), Mao was to utilize this framework to interpret the varying modes of production still existing in Chinese society:

Does primitive communal ownership still exist in our country? I'm afraid it does among some minority nationalities. Similarly, slave ownership and feudal ownership still exist. From a contemporary standpoint the slave system, the feudal system and the capitalist system are all bad, but historically they were more progressive than the primitive communal system. These systems were progressive at first but not later on and were therefore supplanted in their turn.³²

Several interesting points emerge from this passage. Firstly, it is quite evident that Mao perceived Chinese society as constituted of a diverse mix of ownership forms, and that he was under no illusion as to the differentiated character and lack of social cohesion of Chinese society. This stress on the differentiation of society had been an important characteristic of Mao's perception of social function during the Yan'an period. Secondly, it is instructive that Mao asserts, in line with orthodox Marxism, a continued progression in these varying modes of production, suggesting that the least progressive was primitive communism. This is a quite different emphasis than that which had emerged in the texts of the Yan'an period. In those texts, there is little sense of a progression from one mode of production to another, and indeed, there was a strong impression given that Mao perceived the various stages of class society (slave, feudal, capitalist) as a degeneration from the virtues of primitive communism; moreover, that the history of class society represented a trough from which society would ascend only following the cessation of war. It was observed (in Chapter II) that overt mention of an historical periodization constituted of "three epochs" was largely excised from the post-Liberation Selected Works, and it is probable that the diminished emphasis on the "three epochs" and the reassertion

32. SW V, p. 144; XJ V, p. 128.

of a more orthodox Marxist periodization were closely related.

There is also little reference to the nature and procedures of science during this period, although the references which do appear suggest a continued confidence in science; "We must believe in science and nothing else", Mao was to comment in 1954.³³ Moreover, scientific method necessitated a close attention to "actual conditions",³⁴ utilizing a largely inductive procedure of working "upwards" from the particular to the general:

At cadres' conferences as well as in their work, cadres must be taught how to analyze concrete situations and how, proceeding from the concrete situations in different areas with different historical conditions, to decide on their tasks and methods of work in a given place and time.³⁵

Similarly, Mao was to reiterate his view that Marxism-Leninism had to be integrated and combined with the concrete realities of Chinese society. Moreover, it is clear that he perceived one of the successes of the Yan'an period as this integration:

On the whole, the Rectification movement inside the Party during the War of Resistance against Japan was successful. Its main success was that our leading bodies and large numbers of cadres and Party members obtained a firmer grasp of our basic orientation, which is to unite the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese Revolution. In this respect our Party has taken a long stride forward as compared with all the historical stages before the War of Resistance.³⁶

In retrospect, it seems in fact that the years 1946-54 in the

33. SW V, p. 146; XJ V, p. 131.

34. SW IV, p. 229; XJ IV, p. 1203.

35. SW IV, p. 257; XJ IV, p. 1226. Emphasis added.

36. SW IV, p. 166; XJ IV, p. 1148.

development of Mao's thought can best be represented as a link period interposed between the two major and most significant chapters in his intellectual career. There is little in the texts of this period that could lead to the conclusion that Mao was attempting to extend or refine in any fundamental sense his theoretical position held during the Yan'an period. While there is a sense of transition in Mao's perspective on historical time and the future, the images raised are not substantially transformed. Likewise, in terms of causation, while again there are some indicators of a change in emphasis, there is primarily a strong and largely uncritical reassertion of the role of class and class struggle as the central factors in the historical process. Although Mao could not be portrayed as exactly marking time during this period, the necessary stimulus to engender the intellectual search for innovative theoretical perspectives appears to have been lacking. Such a stimulus appears only to have emerged with the major changes in both the domestic and international environments in the mid-fifties. Mao's intellectual response to that stimulus was to usher in the second great period of his intellectual career, and will be examined in some detail in the chapter which follows.

CHAPTER FOURThe Post-Cooperativization Period: 1955-64

In the Introduction to this thesis, it was argued that a methodologically valid analysis of Mao Zedong's philosophy of history necessitated the establishment of a meaningful periodization in the development of his thought. It was suggested that this necessity derives from the intimate relationship which existed between Mao's thinking and the fluctuating and changing political and social environment which provided him with the fund of experience which influenced his perception of history, its causation and development. Such a methodological position does not deny, of course, the possibility of core values and beliefs persisting beyond a given historical period. It does, however, permit a greater sensitivity to the possibility of adaptation and change in Mao's thinking in response to his perception of change in the external environment, than would the assumption that there exists a temporal equality between the temporally separated fragments of his literary heritage. It was suggested that the Yan'an years, by virtue of certain distinguishing political and historical characteristics, constituted one such period. In this section, it is proposed to examine elements of Mao's philosophy of history during another such period, that between the years 1955-1964.

As with the Yan'an period, the definition of the years 1955-64 as a period in the development of Mao's thought is founded on establishing that these years were possessed (and were seen to be possessed by Mao and others) of a distinguishing historical congruence sufficient to delineate them temporally from the years before and

after; moreover, that the Mao texts themselves bear witness to a reasonable degree of coherence as a reflection of the period within which they were produced. In other words, the period should be seen to emerge from the historical data and Mao's perception of them (as this is disclosed in his writings), rather than being arbitrarily imposed from without.

It is not difficult to establish that Mao perceived the year 1955 as a decisive watershed in the development of socialism in China, and that his perception of this watershed was to lead to the emergence of a new chapter in his own intellectual career. It is evident from the texts that Mao regarded the success of the cooperativization movement of 1955 as ushering in a new stage in China's socialist revolution. "The point is", Mao asserted in his Preface to Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside (1955), "that in the latter half of 1955 the situation in China underwent a fundamental change".¹ Elsewhere in the editorial notes to Socialist Upsurge Mao was to comment that "In 1955, we did these things, and in the space of a few months the situation changed completely".² Moreover, Mao believed that this change, ushered in by the cooperativization movement, signified a radical transformation in China's class structure; "In short, in the second half of 1955, a fundamental change took place in the balance of class forces in our country; socialism soared and capitalism plunged".³ This "hightide of socialist transformation", as Mao described it,⁴ led him to believe that "nineteen fifty-five has been the decisive year for the struggle between socialism and capitalism in China".⁵

It is therefore clear that the events of 1955 were perceived by

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1. SW V, p. 239; XJ V, p. 222; SUICC, p. 8.
 2. SW V, p. 249; XJ V, p. 232; SUICC, p. 138.
 3. SW V, p. 249; XJ V, p. 232; SUICC, p. 139.
 4. SW V, p. 245; XJ V, p. 228; SUICC, p. 150.
 5. SW V, p. 249; XJ V, p. 233.

Mao as constituting a decisive change in China's development; moreover, that his perception of the success of cooperativization was to function as a catalyst motivating a heightened level of intellectual inquiry and activity as Mao sought to grapple with the multifaceted problems of the socialist transition. However, while Mao's perception of the success of cooperativization may allow us to isolate 1955 as the starting point of this new and vigorous chapter in Mao's intellectual development, it remains a fact that the designation of the years 1955-64 as a period in Mao's thought is not without its methodological difficulties. For this was a volatile and seemingly changeable era in modern Chinese political history. Along several important themes and dimensions there were clearly changes and fluctuations. In terms of economic development, these years witnessed the lurch towards and retreat from the Great Leap Forward, an experiment in mass mobilization now portrayed by the Chinese leadership as resulting from Mao's impatience for "quick results" and his overestimation of "the role of man's subjective will and efforts".⁶ Similarly, China's foreign relations and role in the international arena were characterized by a simmering dispute between China and the Soviet Union, a dispute made public in 1960 and which proceeded with noisy rhetoric and mutual recrimination throughout the early 1960s. Again, in terms of domestic policy on ideology and the question of the intellectuals, there appears to have been sudden policy changes; the Hundred Flowers experiment of 1957 with its dramatic transformation into an anti-rightist campaign is but one example of the rapid shifts which characterized Chinese political life at this time. A final example of such changes during these years is Mao's own loss of influence and power in the wake of the Lushan Plenum of 1959. At this Plenum, the Great Leap Forward and Mao's role in it were seriously questioned, and Mao was obliged to admit that the "main responsibility" for faulty economic policies was his.⁷ Following the

6. Beijing Review No. 27 (July 6) 1981, p. 19.

Lushan Plenum the policies required to rectify China's serious economic plight came to be perceived as conducive to a resoration of capitalism, which in turn led to his more vigorous assertion of the existence of classes and class struggle during the entire period of the socialist transition.

If China's political history during the years 1955-64 and Mao's own political fortunes were characterized by these changes and fluctuations, is it still valid to argue that these years could constitute a period in the development of Mao's thought ? After all, the premise mobilized in this study insists that there was an important connection between the development of Mao's thought and the historical and political environment within which that thought emerged. Would it not perhaps be safer to further subdivide these years, utilizing (for example) the Lushan Plenum of July 1959 as the cut-off point ? To insist that the years 1955-64 do constitute a period in Mao's thought it is necessary to establish that there was a measure of continuity in his thought which transcended these changes, and that there were binding themes which ran through and provided some degree of internal coherence to Mao's thought during these years. Indeed, it will be argued here that evidence for such binding themes and internal coherence can be found in several important areas of Mao's thought during the years 1955-64, and that this constitutes evidence sufficient to warrant the designation of these years as a period.

The first of these binding themes was Mao's determination to forge an alternative strategy for economic development, the Chinese road to socialism. Mao's perception of the success of cooperativization must be regarded as one important factor in precipitating his decision to seek a programme for economic development in close conformity with those

features he felt to be singular to China. The success of cooperativization indicated to Mao the possibility that an alternative to the range of policies subsumed under the rubric "leaning to one side" did exist. As early as 1940, Mao had utilized this term to demonstrate that his sympathies lay with the Soviet Union,⁸ and with the assumption of power in 1949, he indicated the necessity of taking the experiences of the Soviet Union as the guide for economic construction.⁹ Yet, the adoption (through political expediency as well as economic necessity) of techniques derived elsewhere and in response to a different set of historically-defined particularities, was obviously a policy decision at some variance with Mao's predilection of the Yan'an period for asserting the absolute necessity of tailoring policy decisions to the particularities defining each historical context. The very success of cooperativization allowed Mao the necessary political manoeuvrability to reinstate the paramountcy of this principle by formulating a developmental strategy appropriate to those particularities he perceived as defining the Chinese social and economic system at that historical moment. This strategy was to find its initial formulation in a document of April 1956 entitled On the Ten Great Relationships. In subsequent years, Mao was to refer on several occasions to the objectives of the strategy sketched out in this document. At the Chengdu Conference of March 1958, Mao recalled that "In April 1956 I put forward the "Ten Great Relationships", which made a start in proposing our own line in construction. This was similar to that of the Soviet Union in principle, but had our own content".¹⁰ Some months later, Mao argued that the economic framework proposed in April 1956 had as one of its objectives the acceleration of China's economic development through the promotion of policies suited to the structures of her indigenous economy:

8. SW II, p. 364; XJ II, p. 651; Ji VII, p. 182.

9. SW IV, p. 423; XJ IV, p. 1370.

10. MTTU, p. 101; Wansui (1969), p. 163.

Why do we talk about the ten great relationships? They constitute the basic viewpoint. It is for the purpose of comparison with the Soviet Union. Besides the Soviet method, is it possible to find another method which is even faster and better than the Soviet Union and the European nations? The road of China's industrialization includes the simultaneous promotion of the large, medium and small (enterprises), and of industry and agriculture. We do not say that we are competing with the Soviet Union, but actually we are vying with the teacher.¹¹

It therefore appears obvious that Mao himself perceived the events of 1955 as a watershed in the development of China's socialist economy, a watershed of a magnitude sufficient to warrant a radical departure in policies for economic and social development. His decision to commence the formulation of a singularly Chinese road to socialism was a response to the success of cooperativization, and this response was perceived as legitimized and reinforced following the disclosures of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956, at which alternate roads to socialism were acknowledged by the Soviet leadership.¹²

Moreover, despite the setbacks of the Great Leap Forward of 1958, which constituted the clearest economic and political manifestation of Mao's vision of a singularly Chinese road to socialism, his determination to forge such a distinct programme for economic development remained unabated and emerges clearly in the Mao texts of the early 1960s. In these texts, Mao insisted that the experiences of the Great Leap Forward had not been all negative, and that if a long-term perspective were taken, "the campaign was of great value for it had opened wide an entire phase of economic construction".¹³

11. Miscellany I, p. 121; Wansui (1969), p. 222.

12. See M & A, pp. 282-285.

13. COSE, p. 88; Miscellany II, p. 285; Wansui (1967), pp. 213-4; Wansui (1969), p. 365.

Similarly, it is quite evident that Mao did not consider a return to the Soviet model as warranted on the basis of the experiences of the Great Leap Forward. To the contrary, Mao was, in his textual criticism of the Soviet Manual of Political Economy (1961-2), to elaborate at considerable length his continued disagreement with Soviet policies for economic development. And in his 7,000 cadres speech of January 1962, Mao was to assert that the formulation of policies in conformity with the "objective laws" of development involved a process of practice, of trial and error, through which knowledge came to more faithfully reflect such "objective laws"; the implication being that even the negative experiences of the Great Leap Forward had been useful in refining knowledge of the process of socialist construction in the Chinese context.¹⁴

Mao's attempts to formulate and implement a Chinese road to socialism therefore characterize the intellectual endeavours of the years 1955-64, and reinforce the legitimacy of regarding them as a period in Mao's intellectual development.

A second and important theme which runs through the texts of these years is Mao's insistence on the continued existence of classes and class struggle during the socialist transition. Both before and after the Great Leap Forward, Mao was to comment on this characteristic of socialist society. However, while this is a persistent and recurring theme in the Mao texts of these years, it is a theme which does itself undergo some modification in the wake of the Great Leap Forward. The setbacks of the Great Leap Forward, Mao's subsequent loss of influence, and the economic policies pursued in the early 1960s, combined to heighten Mao's sensitivity to the possible threat such continued existence of classes and class

14. TEWC, p. 18; ZKDDZY, pp. 18-9; MTTU, pp. 172-3; Wansui (1969), p. 411.

struggle posed for the realization of a truly socialist society. Consequently, Mao began to ponder the social mechanism which might permit the emergence of a 'new bourgeoisie', a phenomenon which he came to regard as having the potential of vitiating the social and historical goals raised by Marxism. It will be argued (in Section II below) that the unresolved problem of ownership constituted an important element of Mao's explanation of this phenomenon, although it is apparent that his concern was intensified by the appearance of other social factors (such as the deleterious effects of bureaucracy) which exacerbated the social tensions which existed as a result of the continued existence of an ownership system in which individual ownership or private property persisted.

However, while there was this evident modification along this dimension of Mao's thought and an increasing concern with this problem, this was to be one of the persistent themes of these years, and again evidence to support the contention that the years 1955-64 should be regarded as a period in the development of Mao's thought.

Thirdly, it will become evident as this chapter unfolds that it is possible to extract a 'notional model' of social and historical causation which draws on all of the texts of these years. The coherence and internal logic of the texts along this important dimension in Mao's thought provides perhaps the strongest defence for utilizing the years 1955-64 as a period. For, despite the variations which characterize these years, this consistency on the problem of causation does suggest a binding and unifying thread measured against which such variations appear as secondary. Moreover, it would seem apparent that Mao's views on social and historical causation were intimately linked with his position on the formulation of a Chinese road to socialism, the former informing the latter and providing it with theoretical substance. A useful test of this link can be gained by applying the model of causation extricated from the texts to an

explanation of the Great Leap Forward. Such a test is applied at the end of Section I below, and it emerges that there is indeed a logical fit between these two dimensions of Mao's thought.

The definition of the 1955-64 as a period in the development of Mao's thought does not therefore rely on an insistence that these years were characterized historically by complete uniformity, or that the texts do not disclose some variation along certain themes; for it is quite clear that this was a chapter in both Chinese history and Mao's own political and intellectual career in which there were contours and variations. Rather, it relies on the existence of major themes which persisted throughout these years and functioned to provide a degree of unity and coherence to Mao's thought. It also relies on the assumption that the variations which did occur along some themes within the texts do not represent an intellectual departure of a magnitude sufficient to suggest the emergence of a new period in Mao's thought.

The years between cooperativization and the Cultural Revolution, which was to precipitate another dramatic departure in China's history and Mao's career, are thus utilized in this study as a period in Mao's thought. This will not, however, preclude our identification of important variations which did occur in certain themes in Mao's thought during this period. In the analysis which follows, we will be pursuing and interpreting themes similar to those which emerged in our analysis of Mao's Yan'an writings. It will become evident that certain of Mao's views had undergone substantial change since the Yan'an period; also, that in other areas of Mao's thought there was a degree of continuity. The employment of a periodization will hopefully highlight these areas of continuity and change.

I. Causation in History

A concomitant of Mao's search for a uniquely Chinese road to socialism was an increased sensitivity on his part to the interrelated nature of the various sectors which constitute the fabric of society. Although Mao had perceived these varying sectors of society as in a state of interrelatedness and interdependency during the Yan'an period, the very fragmentation of contemporary Chinese society had militated against his overemphasizing these attributions. During the Yan'an period, Mao had not perceived China as possessed of a unitary and cohesive society, and had subsequently incorporated the social differentiation then evident into a model of society deeply riven by competing and coexisting "economic", "political", and "cultural" sectors. It is no mere coincidence that with the continuing consolidation of the Chinese political and economic system following Liberation in 1949, Mao began to systematically employ the concept of a "social system" (*shehui zhidu*) as a general category to characterize and describe society and social function. Mao utilized this concept in two related senses. In the first of these, he employed the term comparatively, as a general means of distinguishing between societies characterized by radically different socio-economic structures; that is, to differentiate between socialist "social systems" and capitalist "social systems". In his analysis of the relationship between central and local authorities in On the Ten Great Relationships (April 1956), for example, Mao referred to the social system of capitalist countries as being "fundamentally different" from that in China.¹⁵ And in his

15. SW V, p. 293; XJ V, p. 276.

Reading Notes on the Soviet Manual of Political Economy (1961-62)

he argued that it was this differentiation in "social system" which accorded superiority to socialist countries:

Socialist countries invariably are better than imperialist countries. We understand this principle. The fundamental question is a question of systems. Systems determine in which direction a country is going.¹⁶

Secondly, Mao employed the concept "social system" generically, as an inclusive term to convey conceptually the constituent and interrelated sectors of society. Mao identified these sectors of the social system as the relations of production or economic base (chiefly the ownership system), and the various elements of the superstructure--the organs of power, government, and ideology. Mao employed this identification on occasions sufficient to indicate that the notion of a "social system" constituted of such sectors had become a general conceptual apparatus with which he approached the analysis of society and social development.¹⁷ It is obvious, of course, that the various sectors of Mao's "social system" (such as the superstructure) were also generic terms incorporating constituent elements (and these will be analyzed subsequently), but it is useful to note at the outset that Mao did utilize a broad conceptual framework which incorporated the various structures of society and indicated their interrelatedness.

In so taking note of Mao's use of the concept of a "social system", it must be emphasized that there is no suggestion of a Parsonian equilibrium in Mao's employment of that concept.¹⁸ "Before

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16. Miscellany II, p. 297; COSE, p. 104; Wansui (1967), p. 228; Wansui (1969), p. 380.
 17. SW V, p. 460; XJ V, p. 443; also USW, p. 259; Wansui (1969), p. 112; also USW, p. 262; Wansui (1969), p. 115.
 18. For a comparison of Mao's views on struggle and Western concepts of equilibrium, see James C. Hsiung, "Confucian 'Harmony', Maoist 'Struggle', and their Western Counterparts: A Dialectical Comparison", Journal of Chinese Philosophy 4 (1977), pp. 261-269.

the new social system can be built on the site of the old", he commented in 1955, "the site must be swept clean".¹⁹ Even under socialism, Mao predicted that the "social system" could become outmoded due to contradictions between the different sectors of the system, and consequently need a continuing succession of "revolutions" to adjust those contradictions.²⁰ Because the development of the "social system" was characterized by imbalance requiring adjustment, the process of consolidation of any "social system" was necessarily limited;²¹ any attempt at excessive consolidation could be counter-productive, leading to a rigidification in ideology and a reduced ability to adapt to further developments.²² By the same token, it must also be pointed out that Mao's utilization of the concept of a "social system" did not preclude his observation of incongruence (or in his own terminology, "contradictions") existing within the social framework. As in the Yan'an period, cleavages in the social fabric did exist, and elements of formerly dominant social structures persisted; yet these were now subordinated by the dominance of socialist structures within the "social system". Consequently, Chinese society could be categorized as having a socialist "social system". Moreover, even from within this socialist "social system" contradictions could and did emerge. As we shall see, Mao believed it was the function and within the capacity of the socialist "social system" itself to resolve such contradictions;²³ the nature of the

19. SW V, p. 260; XJ V, p. 244; SUICC, p. 302.

20. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 318.

21. COSE, p. 101; Miscellany II, p. 295; Wansui (1967), p. 225; Wansui (1969), p. 377.

22. COSE, p. 70; Miscellany II, p. 272; Wansui (1967), p. 198; Wansui (1969), p. 349.

23. SW V, p. 393; XJ V, p. 373.

system therefore determined its ability to resolve its own contradictions. It was primarily for this reason that Mao could assert that the "fundamental question is a question of systems",²⁴ and that "systems are of decisive importance".²⁵

It is proposed at this point to attempt to piece together a definition of the elements Mao perceived as constituting the "social system". Such a definition will in the first instance be largely structural, leaving aside for the moment the question of the nature of the relationship and influence between these different elements. Then, following a brief discussion of Mao's views on the Marxian category of the forces of production (which Mao placed outside his concept of the "social system"), an attempt will be made to resolve this question of relationship and influence, and to elucidate the manner in which Mao perceived the functioning and development of society.

As this reconstruction of Mao's views proceeds, we will have cause to note on several occasions that Mao had still not entirely freed himself from reliance on Stalin's views on the structures that constituted society. In references to elements of the 'social system' and in his exclusion of the forces of production from the 'social system', Mao appears to have borrowed from views expressed by Stalin in his own theoretical works. However, it will be argued that while Mao's views may still have been influenced by Stalin, such Stalinist perspectives were

24. Miscellany II, p. 297; COSE, p. 104; Wansui (1967), p. 228; Wansui (1969), p. 380.

25. NCNA 1717 (31 December 1956), Suppt., 250, p. 8.

to be applied by Mao in a manner which resulted in a view of historical causation significantly different from that of Stalin.

Let us begin by looking at the relations of production, which Mao equated with the economic base of society.

In July 1957, Mao referred to the economic base as equivalent to the system of ownership of the means of production.²⁶ More frequently, however, he equated the economic base with the relations of production, although he did appear to regard the ownership system as the principal feature of such relations.²⁷ In a speech at Hangzhou

26. USW, p. 262; Wansui (1969), p. 115.

27. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 319.

in April 1958, Mao interpreted the relations of production as being constituted of three elements; the ownership system, mutual relations, and distribution relations.²⁸ As examples of the mutual relations (*xianghu guanxi*), Mao included "the relations between the party and the political work groups in the plant, between the cadres and members in the cooperative, between the party and political personnel of all levels and the lower echelons, between the cadres and the masses, and between school principal and teachers and (their) students".²⁹ Mao was to repeat this tripartite division of the relations of production several times in his Reading Notes of the early 1960s. In discussing the contradictions between the relations and forces of production under socialism, Mao asserted that "production relations include ownership of the means of production, the relations among people (*ren yu ren*) in the course of production (that is, what Mao referred to previously as "mutual relations"), and the distribution system".³⁰ In the same section, Mao averred that one could speak with a greater degree of certainty with regard to change in the system of ownership than was the case with either mutual relations or the distribution system; "in this respect it is difficult to say what we can be sure of. Much remains to be written about human relations in the course of labour".³¹

It is worth noting here that Mao appears to have borrowed this tripartite division of the relations of production from Stalin. In his Dialectical and Historical Materialism, Stalin makes clear reference

28. Miscellany I, p. 87; Wansui (1969), p. 183.

29. Ibid.

30. COSE, p. 67; Miscellany II, p. 270; Wansui (1967), pp. 195-6; Wansui (1969), pp. 347-8.

31. Ibid.

to the relations of production being constituted of three factors; ownership, distribution, and mutual relations of people in the process of production. Stalin also indicates that ownership constitutes the most fundamental feature or 'basis' of the relations of production.³²

In his Reading Notes, Mao (once again echoing Stalin)³³ asserted that the relations of production constituted the proper object of study for political economy, and pondered the correct method of writing a text on such a

32. Stalin, Problems of Leninism, Op.cit., p. 867; see also J.V. Stalin, Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. (Peking: FLP, 1972), p. 75.

33. Economic Problems..., p. 75.

subject. In so doing, he reiterated the tripartite division, and discussed the way he would analyze these three different elements in writing such a text. The first area of study would, he thought, be the ownership system:

First we (would) describe the conversion of ownership of the means of production from private to public: how we converted private ownership of bureaucratic capital and the capitalist ownership system into socialist ownership by the whole people; how private ownership of the land by the landlords was turned first into private ownership by individual peasants and then into collective ownership under socialism; only then could we describe the contradiction between the two forms of public ownership under socialism and how collective ownership under socialism could make the transition to people's ownership under communism. At the same time, we must describe how people's ownership itself changes: the system of transferring cadres to lower levels, right of autonomy of enterprises, etc.³⁴

In turning his attention to the problem of the relations among people during productive labour, Mao asserted that the paramount point at issue was the question of administration, and he listed some of the methods being tested under Chinese conditions:

After the question of ownership is solved, the most important question is administration--how enterprises owned either by the whole people or the collective are administered. This is the same as the question of the relations among people under a given ownership system, a subject that could use many articles. Changes in the ownership system in a given period of time always have their limits, but the relations among people in productive labour may well, on the contrary, be in ceaseless change. With respect to administration of enterprises owned by the whole people, we have adopted a set of approaches: a combination of centralized leadership and mass movements; combinations of party leaders, working masses, and technical personnel; cadres participating

34. COSE, p. 111; Miscellany II, p. 302; Wansui (1967), p. 234; Wansui (1969), pp. 385-6.

in production; workers participating in administration; steadily changing unreasonable regulations and institutional practices.³⁵

It is of importance to take note here of the fact that Mao perceived the administration of enterprises as constituting an important aspect of the mutual relations formed during productive labour; that is, administration of these enterprises properly constituted an aspect of the relations of production, or in other words, the economic base of the "social system". From the administrative approaches he lists, two points suggest themselves. Firstly, there would appear to be no absolute correlation between the ownership system itself and the mutual relations formed during labour; not only were these approaches "adopted" (*caiyong*) rather than representing an automatic manifestation of the ownership system, the potentiality for change of the mutual relations formed during labour far exceeded that of the ownership system which was, Mao asserted, limited. Secondly, Mao's approach to the concept of the administration of economic enterprises suggests a perception of the economic base which incorporated much of what one might suspect to be properly reserved for the realm of politics; "centralized leadership and mass movements" and the changing of "unreasonable regulations and institutional practices" indicate something broader than relations engendered during the act of production itself. The extended conception of this aspect of the economic base is, in fact, reminiscent of Mao's utilization of the concept raised in On New Democracy (1940) of a "basis" (*genju*) of society incorporating both political and economic elements. Indeed, on one occasion in 1958, Mao was to refer to the

35. COSE, pp. 111-112; Miscellany II, p. 302; Wansui (1967), p. 234; Wansui (1969), p. 386.

political and ideological aspects of the mutual relations.³⁶

In analyzing the distribution system as an aspect of the relations of production, Mao appears to have been concerned not only with the physical aspects of commodity distribution but also the motivating principle governing the allocation of commodities. He abjured the principle enunciated in the Soviet Manual by which the distribution system was geared to the distribution of material incentives in order to elicit continued and hopefully increasing production. This promotion of material incentives as the underlying premise of the distribution system was prosaic and lacking in revolutionary commitment and vision; "The goal to lead people toward is not "one spouse, one country house, one automobile, one piano, one television". This is the road of serving the self, not the society".³⁷ Moreover, Mao was not convinced that sole reliance on material incentives could elicit the desired objectives. Why was it, he queried, discrepancies in production output existed between workers receiving the same levels of material reward? In a long section devoted to the problems of material incentive, Mao asserted that such discrepancies in output were a function of another variable--political consciousness:

Even if the importance of material incentive is recognized, it is never the sole principle. There is always another principle, namely, spiritual inspiration from political ideology. And, while we are on the subject, material incentive can not simply be discussed as individual interest. There is also the collective interest to

36. Wansui (1969), p. 223; the translation at Miscellany I, p. 121 is not accurate.

37. COSE, p. 112; Miscellany II, p. 303; Wansui (1967), p. 235; Wansui (1969), p. 386.

which individual interest should be subordinated, long-term interests to which temporary interests should be subordinated, and the interests of the whole to which partial interests should be subordinated. 38

It would appear that Mao's perception of the distribution system included the governing premises upon which the allocation of resources and commodities was predicated. He therefore regarded the distribution system as constituted of two aspects; the physical distribution itself, and the motivational principle guiding that distribution. The inclusion of the latter (what one might describe as the axiological foundation of distribution) again suggests that Mao's perception of the relations of production encompassed social elements beyond the narrowly economic. It would also appear, as with the mutual relations, that the relationship between the ownership system (especially the configuration of classes within that system) and the distribution system did not express itself automatically or in any necessarily self-evident form; that is, a certain ownership system may have a distribution system whose function varied according to the distributive principle governing the physical features of distribution, rather than varying in necessary conformity to the structure or development of the ownership system. This distributive principle could be constituted of a relative admixture of the two poles of a distributive continuum, material or non-material incentives, and the priority ascribed to either would alter the functioning of the physical system of distribution.

For Mao, therefore, the economic base of the social system

38. COSE, pp. 83-4; Miscellany II, p. 282; Wansui (1967), p. 210; Wansui (1969), pp. 361-2.

was constituted of three sectors, of which the ownership system was of principal importance. While political and historical experience appears to have indicated to Mao the possibility of permutation in the nature of the relationship between these three sectors, it is improbable that he regarded the possibility for such permutation as infinite. Although Mao did not discuss precisely or at any length the nature of the relationship between these sectors, the very fact that he regarded the economic base (or the relations of production) as one of the principal aggregates of the "social system", suggests that he perceived a relative congruence existing between its three constituent sectors; that is, while the mutual relations or distribution system were not necessarily an automatic manifestation of the ownership system, the possibility of a completely unrestrained variability was limited by the nature of the principal aspect of the economic base, namely the ownership system itself. The ownership system, being principal, defined the parameters for possible variability, but could not dictate, within that range, the exact form in which related sectors found manifestation. In Maoist terminology, the potential for both "conformity" and "contradiction" existed between these different sectors. This potentiality was based implicitly on the perception of a necessary interrelatedness between these sectors, although such perception did not constitute a presumption of a rigid or inflexible relationship in which change in one sector presumed automatically commensurate change in another; as we have seen, Mao perceived a differing potential for change between the mutual relations and the ownership system. Rather, the influence between sectors was that of historical limitation, establishing the parameters and creating a predisposition for structure and function

in related sectors. Mao appears to have assumed the interrelatedness of the sectors of the economic base, but (as with his view of class struggle during the Yan'an period) not the specific form that such interrelatedness would take at any particular historical moment. The latter was a subject for concrete analysis to elucidate those particularities defining the social system at that moment in historical development. To create a supra-temporal formula to categorize that interrelatedness would have been, for Mao, tantamount to ahistoricity, a negation of the historically-produced regularities, which by their possible specificity, could not be presumed in the assertion of interrelatedness.

It will also emerge as our analysis proceeds that Mao did not perceive the different sectors of the economic base either severally or collectively as immune from developments within non-economic sectors of the "social system". This lack of immunity introduces the possibility that the nature of the sectors in the economic base and their relationship were not a function solely of developments within the economic base, and that an explanation of these factors would need extend beyond the economic base itself. This possibility will be explored subsequently.

As in the Yan'an period, Mao's perception of the functioning of society during the post-cooperativization period incorporated the notion of differentiation within the economic base. Although he believed that the socialist system was becoming consolidated in China (and especially so since the success of cooperativization), he was nevertheless sensitive to the heterogeneous quality of the economic base. As we have seen, he regarded the ownership system as the

principal sector of the relations of production or economic base, and that, in contemporary China, this ownership system was characterized by several different types of ownership; socialist ownership by the whole people, collective ownership, and individual ownership.³⁹

Mao's perception of the co-existence of these varying ownership types was to have a significant bearing on his perception of class and class struggle persisting within socialist society; as Mao was to point out in his Reading Notes, "If there are three types of ownership there will be contradiction and (class) struggle".⁴⁰ As we shall observe subsequently, however, the schema employed by Mao in the explanation of historical causation and sequence did not automatically presume class struggle to constitute the dominant contradiction within the relations of production, so that subsequently such a schema might be applicable in the analysis of a future society in which class and class struggle (because of the consolidation of a fully socialist ownership system) had ceased to be the most obvious feature of social function. Thus, while he remained sensitive to the persistence of classes within Chinese society (and his views on this problem will be assessed in a subsequent section), his model for the analysis of a socialist (or even communist) society came to incorporate the possibility of development and progression in a social context in which class and class struggle had ceased to represent the principal contradiction within the relations of production.

39. COSE, pp. 107, 111; Miscellany II, pp. 299, 302; Wansui (1967), pp. 230, 234; Wansui (1969), pp. 382, 385-6.

40. Ibid.

In our analysis of Mao's views on historical causation during the Yan'an period, it emerged that Mao rarely employed the concept of superstructure in analyzing or describing social function. This lack of emphasis on the concept of the superstructure appeared to be the result of Mao's perception of a need for the conceptual separation of "politics" and "culture", and his tendency to regard the combination of "politics" and "economics" as constituting the historically generative sector of society. Although Mao did not underestimate the importance of "culture" in facilitating historical change generated by society's "basis", he did not appear inclined to attribute it with historical primacy. It was also noted that on the one occasion where Mao did employ the notion of superstructure substantively, his attribution of "principal and decisive" function to it was carefully circumscribed by qualifications.

This disinclination to employ the concept of superstructure during the Yan'an period is startlingly reversed in the period after 1955. Indeed, the texts of the post-cooperativization period provide ample demonstration that the superstructure had assumed a vital position in the manner in which Mao perceived and analyzed the "social system", its function and development. Here again, the emphasis Mao placed on the superstructure during the late 1950s and early 1960s must be regarded as a function of the historical environment itself. There is no doubt that, with the success of cooperativization, Mao regarded the question of ownership in the rural areas as well on the way to being basically resolved. Moreover, he commented in his Reading Notes that the remoulding of capitalist industry and commerce also had been basically concluded.⁴¹ At the time, and in retrospect, it

41. COSE, p. 64; Miscellany II, p. 268; Wansui (1967), p. 193; Wansui (1969), p. 345.

appeared to Mao that the vital problem of ownership appeared comparatively tractable; as Mao was to point out in November of 1957, "The system of ownership was changed in 1956, and this was a comparatively easy matter (*bijiao rongyide*)..."⁴² Rather less tractable were the numerous challenges which emerged or persisted elsewhere in the "social system". It is probable that Mao initially believed (and hoped) that the transformation of the ownership system would be a major predisposing factor in the resolution of problems and contradictions which he perceived in the cultural, ideological and political spheres of society. Mao's categorization of the intellectuals in the immediate post-1955 era as having no social base, as being "gentlemen in mid-air", is a case in point. Mao believed that the radical change in the ownership system had destroyed the social and economic base of the intellectuals from the old society, and that the problem they represented would be evanescent and temporary. The fact that Mao was still heavily preoccupied with the problem of these intellectuals during the latter part of this period and throughout the Cultural Revolution, indicates that his expectations had not been fulfilled.⁴³ The transformation of the ownership system plus the intractability of such contradictions and problems combined to focus Mao's attention on the area of the "social system" in which these contradictions and problems persisted and emerged. In response to these challenges, Mao began to utilize the Marxist category of the superstructure to describe this area of society, and to exploit it analytically in an attempt to disclose the nature and source of such problem areas, and to reveal the means

42. USW, pp. 428, 430.

43. See SW V, pp. 470, 504, 507; XJ V, pp. 452, 486-7, 490; USW, pp. 160-1, 168; Miscellany I, pp. 70-1; Wansui (1969), pp. 101-2, 108.

for their resolution.

If we piece together Mao's references to the superstructure during the post-1955 period, it becomes evident that the concept was generic in that it encompassed a wide range of important social structures and functions. In November of 1956, he categorized the superstructure as constituting "social relations of another kind",⁴⁴ and the fact that Mao was absorbed and distracted by these "social relations of another kind" is indicated by the extensive (if not always systematic) comment bestowed upon them. In the analysis which follows, an attempt will be made to extricate and list those elements Mao regarded as comprising the superstructure, and where possible to analyze the social and historical function he ascribed to these "social relations of another kind".

Mao regarded the state as one of the principal features of the superstructure. Indeed, on one occasion (1957) he parenthetically equated the state (*guojia*) with the superstructure,⁴⁵ and on another (again, 1957), he asserted that the organs of power of the state apparatus (*zhengquan jiguan*) constituted the primary position in the superstructure.⁴⁶ In other references, however, he merely listed the state and the state apparatus amongst other elements characterizing the superstructure.⁴⁷ The importance Mao attached to the state as an element of the superstructure derived from the emphasis he placed on the organs of coercion within the ambit of the state, and which were at the state's behest. In particular, the documents of the post-1955

44. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 319.

45. SW V, p. 479; XJ V, p. 462.

46. SW V, p. 460; XJ V, pp. 443-4.

47. SW V, p. 395; XJ V, p. 374; also USW, pp. 259, 262; Wansui (1969), pp. 112, 115.

period provide no evidence of any uncertainty as to the importance of the role of the armed forces as an institution of the state, and it appears that the increased attention Mao paid to the superstructure generally elicited this precise definition of the role armed force played in the structure and functioning of the state. In 1957, Mao asserted that the armed forces represented the chief constituent of the state machinery of both old and new states,⁴⁸ and in a most interesting comment made to a delegation from the Japanese Socialist Party in 1964, he pointed to the primacy of the armed forces within the superstructure as a factor militating against "structural reformism" (*jiegou gaigelun*):

If you don't read essays and books on structural reformism, there's no way that you will understand it. What is it that is described as a structure? It is the superstructure. The first aspect of the superstructure, the basic, the principal thing, is the armed forces. If you want to reform them, how do you go about it? An Italian [Mao is probably referring here to Togliatti] put forward this theory, and said that the structures must be reformed. Italy has an army and police force of several hundred thousand; what method can be used for their reform? ...You and I are of one mind on this, we don't believe in structural reformism..⁴⁹

In Mao's view, the very nature of the coercive appendages of the state presented an obstacle (within capitalist societies) to the peaceful reform or restructuring of the superstructure. Those who suggested the possibility of such peaceful restructuring did not, in Mao's estimation, comprehend the true function of such coercive institutions, which was the maintenance of the state by the employment of actual or potential violence. In his Reading Notes of

48. PR No. 37 (13 September) 1963, p. 21.

49. Wansui (1969), p. 544.

the early 1960s, Mao spelt out his conviction that the institutions of violence were an integral part of the state; "The nature of the state is that it is a machine for the oppression of forces opposed to it...the so-called form of the state is nothing more than the armed forces, prisons, arrests, executions, etc".⁵⁰ Moreover, in the documents which emerged as the Sino-Soviet split developed, these authoritarian characteristics of the state were emphasized to demonstrate that excessive optimism in the possibilities for peaceful reform or restructuring was unwarranted; "The emergence and existence of the state is itself a kind of violence", the editorial Long Live Leninism (1960) asserted, and (quoting Engels) argued that the public power "consists not merely of armed men, but of material appendages, prisons and coercive institutions of all kinds".⁵¹ Similarly, the article Proletarian Revolution and Khrushchov's Revisionism (1964) pointed on several occasions to the army and police as representing the chief components of the state machine,⁵² and both here, and in

50. Wansui (1969), p. 376; Wansui (1967), p. 224; COSE, pp. 99-100; Miscellany II, pp. 293-4.

51. LLL, p. 23. The methodological legitimacy for utilizing this and other documents not identified by the Chinese as having been written by Mao, rests on the assumption (by many Western scholars) that Mao either wrote these documents wholly or in part himself, or personally supervised their writing. For example, this view is adopted by Stuart Schram who comments in his biography of Mao:

It is generally assumed that Mao Tse-tung wrote portion of this (Long Live Leninism) and the other important anonymous texts published subsequently in Peking, or at least inspired them and added a few characteristic touches to the final version. (Mao Tse-tung, Op. cit., p. 302.)

See also John Bryan Starr's "Revolution in Retrospect: The Paris Commune Through Chinese Eyes", China Quarterly 49 (Jan/March) 1972, pp. 112-113 n, where Starr concurs with a similar judgement passed by Chalmers Johnson. As for the Twenty Five Points of 1963, the Chinese revealed in 1967 that "this document...was drawn up under the personal direction of Chairman Mao...". (PR No. 26 (23 June) 1967.)

52. PRKR, pp. 8, 33-4.

the Twenty Five Points of 1963, this definition of the constituent elements of the state is presented as an important tenet of Marxism.⁵³

For Mao, the centrality of the institutions of violence in the composition of the state apparatus derived from the class nature of the state. As in the Yan'an period, there is no equivocation in Mao's belief that the state historically, and for the foreseeable future was and would remain a political manifestation of the dominant class(es) within society, this manifestation being a function of the dictates of the class struggle by which the dominant class(es) took recourse to the organs of coercion to retain power, and to suppress potential or actual enemies both domestically and abroad. "A state is an instrument of class struggle", Mao asserted in January 1957,⁵⁴ and in his Reading Notes, he resorted to a quote from Marx and Engels to make the point that "the state is by definition an instrument of violence employed to suppress the opposing class".⁵⁵ Mao's views on the class character of the state were also forcefully presented in the Twenty Five Points (1963), in which he refused to acknowledge the possibility of a state immune from class influence:

In the view of Marxist-Leninists, there is no such thing as a nonclass or supraclass state. So long as the state remains a state, it must bear a class character; so long as the state exists, it cannot be a state of the "whole people". As soon as society becomes classless, there will no longer be a state.⁵⁶

In this important passage, the relationship between class and class society to the state is made abundantly clear; while classes

53. MDOCC, p. 258; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 14.

54. SW V, p. 378; XJ V, p. 357.

55. COSE, pp. 40-1; Miscellany II, p. 252; Wansui (1967), p. 174; Wansui (1969), p. 326.

56. MDOCC, pp. 264-5; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 17.

persist, there would remain a state, and this state would continue to function as the creature of the dominant class(es) within society. Although Mao's views on the class character of the state are in no way original (both in style of logic and content strongly reminiscent of Lenin's State and Revolution), the persistence with which he identified with this position reveals a great deal about the way he perceived this important element of the superstructure as deriving historical generation. For the existence of classes and hence class struggle within society was necessarily historically antecedent to the state itself. Moreover, the state was, by virtue of its class character, incapable of transcending such limitations, and manifesting itself as a superordinate entity defending the interests of the society at large regardless of class boundaries and antagonisms. Rather, the function of the state in class society was to establish and maintain what Mao termed "a position of strength", and to exploit this in defence of class interests. This drive to establish such positions of strength appeared from Mao's reading of history to constitute an "inevitable tendency", and because of the logic he employed in which class and state were inseparably linked, such a conclusion must have appeared apodictic.⁵⁷

Mao's conception of the constituent elements of the state did not, however, end with its manifestly coercive organs. When Mao referred to the state apparatus during this period, he appears to have also included the bureaucracy of government, as well as the actual governmental assemblies themselves. Not only did he refer to departments within the Chinese bureaucracy as being part of the state

57. COSE, pp. 59-60; Miscellany II, p. 265; Wansui (1967), p. 189; Wansui (1969), p. 341.

apparatus,⁵⁸ he indicated that it was the military of the state apparatus plus the bureaucracy which had to be destroyed in a revolutionary situation.⁵⁹ In discussing the role of governmental assemblies, Mao's position remained reasonably constant in his attitude to the assemblies of both capitalist and socialist systems. Although he conceded the parliament or assembly as an obvious feature of the superstructure of capitalist social systems,⁶⁰ he was not inclined to attribute it with historical importance of any real significance. In a remark to delegates of the Japanese Socialist Party (some of whom were members of the Diet), Mao warned that if it appeared they could somehow obtain a majority, the representatives of the present government and monopoly capital would merely resort amongst other things to such tactics as revising the electoral laws to their own advantage.⁶¹ Moreover, the actual gaining of a majority in such a parliament was of little significance, for the "chief component of the bourgeois state machine is armed force and not parliament. Parliament is only an ornament and a screen for bourgeois rule".⁶²

This somewhat cynical view of the role of parliament within capitalist states was to represent a central issue in the ideological feud between the Russian and Chinese Communist Parties after 1956. In a major policy shift at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, Khrushchov had introduced both the possibility and desirability of utilizing the parliamentary road in transforming capitalist systems

58. SW V, p. 378; XJ V, p. 357.

59. PR No. 37 (13 September) 1963, p. 21.

60. Wansui (1969), p. 544.

61. Ibid.

62. PRKR, pp. 33-4.

peacefully from within; "The achievement of a sound parliamentary majority relying on the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat and workers would create for the working class of a number of capitalist and ex-colonial countries conditions guaranteeing radical social transformations..."⁶³ For Mao, this heavy reliance on the parliament or assembly within capitalist social systems betokened a misunderstanding of the historical and causal significance of such assemblies, and the nature of the state generally; for parliament was not the locus of power within such systems (although it might superficially give the impression of being so), nor did it comprise the dominant feature of the state apparatus. The function of the state as a representative and instrument of the dominant class within society necessarily prevented one of its constituent elements from a contrary function; and, as we have seen, Mao believed that should a socialist or communist party eventually secure a majority in such a parliament, the rules of the game would be smartly redrawn to ensure a merely Pyrrhic victory for the forces of reform. The probability of such an eventuality was spelt out clearly in a document of November 1957 entitled Outline of Views on the Question of Peaceful Transition:

To obtain a majority in parliament is not the same as smashing the old state machinery... Unless the military-bureaucratic state machinery of the bourgeoisie is smashed, a parliamentary majority for the proletariat and their reliable allies will either be impossible (because the bourgeoisie will amend the constitution whenever necessary to facilitate the consolidation of their dictatorship) or undependable (for instance, elections may be declared null and void, the Communist Party may be outlawed, parliament may be dissolved, etc.).⁶⁴

63. M & A, p. 284.

64. PR No. 37 (13 September) 1963, p. 21; also ODD, p. 60.

While Mao was constrained to reject the notion of a peaceful transition via the parliamentary road because it represented, he believed, a contradiction of one of Marxism's universal laws of historical development, his own experience must also have indicated that any attempt to gain power other than by revolutionary means was a virtual impossibility; "to the best of our knowledge, there is still not a single country where this possibility is of any practical significance".⁶⁵ Likewise, in his Reading Notes of the early 1960s, Mao was to dismiss with scorn the notion that the contemporary political scene offered any likelihood of success for the parliamentary strategy:

The book says on page 330, "In certain capitalist countries, for the working class to take political power through peaceful parliamentary means is a practical possibility". Tell me, which are these "certain countries"? The main capitalist countries of Europe and North America are armed to the teeth. Do you expect them to allow you to take power peacefully? 66

To therefore premise a major policy initiative on such an improbable eventuality, betokened not only a misunderstanding of the functioning of society and the nature of historical development, but an ineptness at comprehending and evaluating the current historical situation. Mao's impatience with Khrushchov's position stemmed not only from his persistent conviction of the class nature of the state, but also from a belief that the dominant class(es) in any society would never relinquish power without an intense struggle; "the bourgeoisie will never hand over state power of their own accord,

65. Ibid.; ODD, p. 59.

66. COSE, pp. 38-9; Miscellany II, p. 251; Wansui (1967), p. 172; Wansui (1969), p. 324.

but will resort to violence".⁶⁷ Because "History shows that all ruling classes depend upon violence to maintain their rule",⁶⁸ those who would seize state power had necessarily to employ the violence of revolution. For Mao, it was almost inconceivable that a peaceful transferral of power could be achieved, and it is because of this that the relationship between revolution and the seizure of state power persisted in his thinking. Indeed, on one occasion he asserted it to be a "universal law of class struggle" that force was necessary in the destruction of the old state machinery and the assumption of power by the oppressed classes.⁶⁹

Mao showed somewhat more indulgence on the infrequent occasions he turned his attention to the government and governmental assemblies of socialist systems. In his Reading Notes, he referred to both the soviets of the Soviet Union and the people's congresses of China as being representative assemblies, and virtually equivalent to each other in nature and function. In discussing the composition of the people's congresses, Mao indicated that such assemblies could be constituted of representatives from more than one class, and could include representatives of the bourgeoisie and prominent democratic figures. The basis for the inclusion of such representatives was their acceptance of the leadership of the Communist Party.⁷⁰ Although Mao would have regarded such assemblies as performing a useful function as transmission belts in the process of policy formulation and implementation, his apparent lack of interest in them at a theoretical

67. 'SW V, p. 495; XJ V, pp. 477-8.

68. PRKR, p. 8.

69. MDOCC, p. 252; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 11.

70. COSE, pp. 42-3; Miscellany II, pp. 253-4; Wansui (1967), p. 175; Wansui (1969), p. 327.

level suggests that he did not perceive such institutions as representing the locus of power within society. Rather, they were (like their counterparts in capitalist systems) an integral though minor feature of the state and superstructure; as such, their function at any historical moment was unlikely to constitute anything more than that of an intermediate instrument involved in the processing of broad class-inspired policy initiatives determined elsewhere. Through administrative and organizational factors, such an instrument might represent a marginal influence on such policy, but never its source.

Mao's position during this post-1955 period on the historical role and causal effectivity of government would thus appear in some contrast to his position enunciated during the Yan'an period. During this earlier period, Mao was (as we observed) prepared to take the role of government very seriously; it was an integral aspect of the "political" realm of society's "basis", and consequently capable of a "concentrating" and organizing function. Similarly, Mao had not been prepared to concede that there existed a necessarily automatic correlation between the class-engendered "state system" and the "system of government"; the two could be "out of harmony". This suggested to Mao that the nature and function of government could have a considerable impact on the way in which policies were formulated and implemented; that government was not merely a lifeless automaton at the behest of the ruling class(es). During the post-1955 period, Mao appeared to have been less inclined to attribute such an important role to government. The reason for this diminished emphasis lies without doubt in the heightened prominence accorded by Khrushchov to the role of government in the peaceful transition to socialism in capitalist countries. Mao was at pains to refute such a

theoretical position, for it allowed a far greater degree of causal effectivity to the institution of government than he was prepared to concede. Khrushchov's position implied that governmental assemblies possessed a causal potentiality sufficient to bring about a transformation of society as dramatic as the transition from capitalism to socialism; this Mao could not accept. This doctrinal disagreement with Khrushchov may thus have led Mao to overstate his case, thus giving a strong impression of a movement from his position on government held during the Yan'an period.

A concomitant of Mao's perception of government as part of the state apparatus of the superstructure was his inclusion of the law within that sphere of society.⁷¹ "Laws form part of the superstructure", Mao remarked in 1957, "They are designed to maintain revolutionary order and protect the interests of the working people, the socialist economic base and the productive forces".⁷² The application of such laws devolved in part upon the security organs of the state, whose task it was to "protect the superstructure",⁷³ and upon the courts.⁷⁴ Another aspect of the law was the rules and regulations formulated by government departments. Both the law and such rules and regulations were mutable, and in Mao's opinion, should be revised or abolished if no longer performing their intended function.⁷⁵

The elements of the state apparatus of the superstructure clearly

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- 71. SW V, p. 395; XJ V, p. 374; also Miscellany I, p. 44; Wansui (1969), p. 71.
 - 72. SW V, p. 379; XJ V, pp. 358-9.
 - 73. MTTU, p. 195; Wansui (1969), p. 435.
 - 74. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 319.
 - 75. MP, p. 66; Wansui (suppt.), p. 33.

identified by Mao therefore appear to have included the state's organs of coercion (the armed forces, police, etc.), government bureaucracies and assemblies, and the law. By virtue of their inclusion in the apparatus of the state, such superstructural elements by definition bore a class character, and functioned largely in response to the interests of the dominant class (or classes) within society. However, one of the problems at the centre of this conception of the state is this very question of "interest"; did Mao perceive a unitary correlation and causal relationship between the economic and class interests of the dominant class(es) and the political actions of the state, and if so, did Mao have any clear conception of the social mechanism which operated to establish and ensure this correlation?; or, did he regard the state as being itself an important factor in the definition of what constituted the interests of the dominant class(es), and functioning in accordance with that perception of "objective" interest?

During the Yan'an period, Mao had regarded the state as a largely unmediated form of class rule at the "political" level (for example, the dictatorship of the proletariat), and he indicated that the possibility of "disharmony" (the possibility of which he adumbrated in the relationship between state and government systems) between the interests of the dominant class(es) and the state was unlikely. After 1955, however, the possibility of "disharmony" existing between the dominant class and the operation of the state appears to have impinged itself on Mao, not only through political events in China, but also as a result of revelations of "mistakes" occurring in the function of the state in the Soviet Union under Stalin. As a result, Mao began to concede that, despite the class nature of the state (a

belief in which he persisted), the state itself represented a mediated form of class rule, and that the possibility of disharmony emerged from the nature of the mediation itself. Although a class might rule, it could only do so at the political level by its representation by delegates operating on its behalf; as Mao was to point out in January 1957, "a class is not to be equated with the state which is formed by a number of people (a small number) from the class in the dominant position".⁷⁶ Unfortunately, the important relationship between this "small number" of people and the class from which they originated and on whose behalf they supposedly functioned, is not spelt out with any clarity in Mao's thinking. It appears, however, that Mao regarded one of the functions of the state, through the operation of the "mass-line", as not only the translating of class interest into political substance, but also in actually collating and defining what constituted those class interests. It should not be construed from this assertion that Mao perceived the state as in some way supplanting the dominant class; the significance he attached to class as progenitive of social activity, and his numerous references to the state as a manifestation of the class struggle and the creature of the dominant class, militates against such an interpretation. However, the very fact that the correct operation of the mass-line was not guaranteed by some historical determinism, and that even when functioning correctly it allowed a degree of latitude to leadership in interpreting the "objective" interests of the dominant class, suggests that Mao perceived the state as possessed of what might be described as "historical discretion"; the limits for action, and in large part the substance of the action also, were established

76. SW V, p. 378; XJ V, p. 357.

by the centre of gravity of opinion and attitude which manifestly constituted the "interest" of the dominant class. But within those confines, the operation of the state, its susceptibility to mistakes and setbacks, its potentiality for achievement, appeared to devolve onto the shoulders of the "small number" of persons thrown up by the dominant class to protect and advance its interests. Thus, although Mao conceded "discretion" to leadership (and the state), this was circumscribed by the nature of the class struggle in general and the "interests" of the dominant class in particular. It is indicative of this position that Mao never conceded that Stalin's mistakes surpassed 30 per cent, while his achievements amounted to 70 per cent.⁷⁷ To have conceded a greater degree of leadership error would have been an admission that objective class interest did not constitute a limitation on leadership discretion and that, for all intents and purposes, leadership could proceed *carte blanche*,

77. SW V, pp. 304, 316, 494-5; XJ V, pp. 286, 298, 477. The first employment of this judgemental ratio by Mao which I have been able to locate appears in a document of March 1949 entitled Methods of Work of Party Committees; that is, well before the reevaluation of Stalin had begun. It is worth reproducing the interesting passage which contains the 30/70 formulation, for it helps throw light on the manner in which Mao was later to apply this ratio to Stalin:

...within the revolutionary ranks, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between right and wrong, between achievements and shortcomings and to make clear which of the two is primary and which secondary. For instance, do the achievements amount to 30 per cent or to 70 per cent of the whole? It will not do to understate or to overstate. We must have a fundamental evaluation of a person's work and establish whether his achievements amount to 30 per cent and his mistakes to 70 per cent, or vice versa. If his achievements amount to 70 per cent of the whole, then his work should in the main be approved. It would be entirely wrong to describe work in which the achievements are primary as work in which the mistakes are primary... To draw these distinctions well, careful study and analysis are of course necessary. (SW IV, p. 381; XJ IV, p. 1334)

unrestrained save for the elastic limits of leadership hubris.

The mechanisms Mao perceived as allowing leadership to remain cognizant of any gap between such class interests and their own activities was (and here reminiscent of his theory of cognition) the assessment of the results of those activities; mistakes indicated a failure to effectively utilize mass-line procedures to maintain awareness of class-prescribed limits to political actions; achievements and success suggested the contrary. This prescription for leadership (and by association, the function of the state) was asserted strongly after 1956, when the necessity for historical justification for leadership and state action emerged at the top of the agenda. In the first of two major editorials⁷⁸ which dealt *inter alia* with this problem, mistakes and setbacks were taken to be evidence of faulty application of mass-line procedures, with a subsequent distance between the objective interests of the dominant class and leadership perception of those interests:

The whole history of our work teaches us that whenever this line is followed, the work is always good, or comparatively good, and even if there are mistakes they are easy to rectify; and whenever this line is not followed, the work is marred by setbacks. This is the Marxist-Leninist method of leadership, the Marxist-Leninist line of work.⁷⁹

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78. Edgar Snow assumed that Mao was the author of the April and December 1956 editorials dealing with the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat; see Red China Today (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 331. Jerome Ch'en, however, argues these editorials "cannot possibly have been written by Mao alone, for neither the style nor the contents lends support to this view. They are, as clearly stated in the preambles, the results of two sessions of Politburo discussions". See Mao (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), p. 29. While I am inclined to agree with Ch'en's position, I believe it methodologically justifiable to assume the opinions of these editorials to mirror Mao's at this time. Mao indeed referred to his participation in the writing of these editorials on several occasions; see SW V, pp. 304, 341; XJ V, pp. 286, 322.
79. NCNA, 1531 (5 April 1956) Suppt. 238, p. 6.

The very fact that Mao conceded the possibility of mistakes and setbacks occurring and hence indicating a gap between leadership of the state and the class(es) it represented, raises several difficulties with regard to his persistently held views on the class nature and function of the state. For even if a small area of "discretion" was open to the operation of those in leadership positions within the state, how was one to explain actions taken within this area of discretion if such actions were not explicable by recourse to the dictates of class interest? Moreover, if such actions were not directly a function of a class position, nor completely circumscribed by the interests of the dominant class, did not then the problem of power arbitrarily employed manifest itself as a threatening possibility? Mao's response was equivocal on these points and one gets the impression that, at a theoretical level, he occasionally exhibited something of an ingenuous optimism with regard to the problem of power. In the second of the two editorials referred to above, the attempt to apply a materialist explanation to Stalin's mistakes and abuses of power faltered on this very problem of the "historical discretion" of the state and its leaders; for in attempting to defend the socialist system by demonstrating that Stalin's mistakes "did not originate in the socialist system" itself,⁸⁰ Mao and his colleagues were forced in the final analysis to concede that such abuses of power originated in large part from the nature of the man himself:

A series of victories and the eulogies he received in the latter years of his life turned his head. He deviated partly, but grossly, from the dialectical materialist way of thinking and

80. NCNA, 1717 (31 December 1956) Suppt. 250, pp. 7-8.

fell into subjectivism. He began to put blind faith in personal wisdom and authority.⁸¹

However, the capriciousness of the leader in Stalin's case was facilitated by what were described as "defects in certain links of the economic and political system",⁸² although we are neither told with any clarity what constituted such "defects", nor the manner in which they facilitated the actualization of Stalin's "subjectivism". Again, the impression given is that, within this area of "historical discretion", a close correlation of dominant class interest with state activity is, in part at least, an axiological imperative rather than an historical determinism. This impression is given greater credence by the repeated emphasis here on the importance of employing mass-line techniques; for without such techniques, leadership of the state may not maintain cognizance of what constituted the "interest" of the class in whose name it spoke and acted. Even when the mass-line was employed, it was not likely that leadership could gain a completely accurate picture of class interest and the realities of contemporary society. As Mao and his colleagues pointed out in this second editorial, "naturally, it is not possible for the views of the leading personnel of the Communist Party and the state to conform completely to reality. Isolated, local and temporary mistakes in their work are therefore unavoidable...".⁸³ It will be recalled that Mao's perception of a "Sinified Marxism" during the Yan'an period incorporated no presumption of leadership infallibility, and in fact, made explicit allowance for a procedure

81. Ibid., p. 9.

82. Ibid., pp. 7-8.

83. Ibid., p. 9. Emphasis in original.

in the event of failure; it appears that, for Mao, the invocation of this allowance for failure was a convenient loop-hole within his reading of Marxism for explaining the "historical discretion" of the state, and how this could eventuate in mistakes and failures resulting from an incongruence between the objective interest of the dominant class and leadership perception of that interest. It is a moot point, however, whether he thereby resolved the apparent contradiction in his thought between his insistence on the class character of the state, and his concession to the state of an area of "historical discretion" which could be (and had been in the case of the Soviet Union) employed in a manifestly arbitrary fashion.

Although Mao did not, in the documents of the post-1955 period, overtly define the political party as a constituent element of the superstructure, it is clear from a reconstruction of his views on the political party and the realm of politics generally that he perceived it as a superstructural element. Indeed, it is evident that Mao regarded the political realm as part of the superstructure; "Marxism teaches us", Mao commented in February 1957, "that democracy is part of the superstructure and belongs to the realm of politics".⁸⁴ Moreover, such identification of the superstructural character of the political realm occurs in the texts with sufficient frequency to apparently put its status beyond doubt.⁸⁵ However, it was noted earlier that, in discussing the relations of production, Mao had incorporated features of social life which appear to be political in the broad sense; "centralized leadership

84. SW V, p. 388; XJ V, p. 368.

85. SW V, p. 464; XJ V, p. 447; also Miscellany I, p. 73; Wansui (1969), pp. 123-4; also USW, p. 259; Wansui (1969), p. 112; also Miscellany I, p. 189; Wansui (1967), p. 121.

and mass movements", for example. While Mao overtly indicated the superstructural character of political institutions and action, his perception of the boundary between political and economic realms tended to be somewhat imprecise. This would suggest that the conceptual distinction between superstructure and economic base did not preclude the possibility that political elements could not be readily disentangled from the economic area of society. Likewise, the interrelated nature of the "social system" also militated against the notion of completely discrete social elements, for some concatenating medium was essential so that developments in one area of society could flow on to another. Thus, while Mao perceived politics as largely superstructural in character, because of the class-generated character of the political realm, there was an intimate and non-discrete connection between economic base and the political realm of the superstructure. The relationship between these areas of society will be explored in more detail subsequently.

By virtue of its political character, it follows that Mao perceived the political party as (largely) functioning as an element of the superstructure, and he was to emphasize the political character of political parties in his talks with Party Committee Secretaries in January of 1957:

A political party is a kind of society, a political kind of society. The primary category in political society consists of political parties and political groups. A political party is a class organization.⁸⁶

It is evident, as with Mao's clearly asserted views on the class character of the state, that he regarded the political party as

86. SW V, p. 355; XJ V, p. 335.

a function of the division of society into classes, and that the role of the political party (as with the state) was the representation at a political level of the interests of the class from which it had arisen; "In the view of Marxist-Leninists, there is no such thing as a nonclass or supraclass political party. All political parties have a class character. Party spirit is the concentrated expression of class character".⁸⁷ This insistence of Mao's on the class character of the political party did not, however, exclude the possibility that a party could accommodate members of more than one class. As was pointed out in Chapter II, the possibility of trans-class representation by a political party had been demonstrated to Mao historically, and his claims for the non-exclusive character of his own party were facilitated by this historical precedence, which in turn prevented him from adopting a purist's position on this issue. Nevertheless, Mao's position on this issue was not open-ended and contained several important qualifications. Firstly, Mao could not envisage the establishment of a political party in the absence of the appropriate socio-economic conditions and the consequent generation of a class requiring specific political organization and representation. For example, when asked in 1964 for his views on the establishment of a communist party in Africa, his immediate response was to stress these factors; "The question of establishing a communist party must rest on whether there are any industrial workers".⁸⁸ Secondly, in a political party (like the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party) manifestly incorporating a trans-class membership, the party's political sentiment and leadership, while accommodating the interests of the other classes, remained largely a function of the demands and

87. MDOCC, p. 266; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 17.

88. Miscellany II, p. 367; Wansui (1969), p. 510.

requirements of the class whose demands and requirements initially brought forth that party. Thus, while the Communist Party might contain a varied class membership, Mao constantly referred to it as "the party of the proletariat".⁸⁹

However, the attribution of trans-class membership as a property of the political party must be regarded as an important premise for the manner in which Mao perceived and explained historical developments within his own party and in some socialist countries. For in Mao's view the very fact that the party could incorporate a trans-class membership robbed it of any immunity from the wider class struggle manifesting itself as a phenomenon internal to the party. Indeed, Mao frequently referred to intra-Party struggle as a "reflection" of class struggle within society at large,⁹⁰ and it would appear that trans-class membership of the party was one important social mechanism permitting such "reflection". There is within this concept of "reflection", however, the implicit qualification that the extent of the class struggle within a political party could not exceed, and was limited by, the balance of class forces and the intensity of the struggle between them in the wider social context. Yet the ramifications of such intra-party class struggle could vary depending on the role of the party within its given historical context; in those historical contexts in which the political party did perform a significant function (for example, domination of the state by the party), the ramifications of such reflected class struggle could be extensive. This form of historical reasoning was, in fact, invoked by Mao and his colleagues in their attempt to explain retrogressive changes they perceived in

89. See MDOCC, p. 266; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 17; also SW V, p. 355; XJ V, p. 335; also MTU, p. 75; Wansui (1969), p. 51.

90. SW V, p. 302; XJ V, p. 284; also CLG I:4, p. 74; Wansui (1967), p. 277.

certain socialist countries. In the polemical leaflet entitled Is Yugoslavia a Socialist Country? (1963), the role of the party in relation to the state was presented as a key factor contributing to subsequent changes in the form of the state and the policies it pursued:

In the socialist countries, state power is under the leadership of communist political parties. With the degeneration of a communist into a bourgeois political party, state power inevitably degenerates from the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. 91

In an historical situation such as this where the role of the party was central, the possible consequences of a reflected class struggle (ensuing at least in part from the trans-class membership of the party) could be of a greater significance than in those contexts in which the party's role was less pronounced or peripheral. Thus, one could not assert the significance of such intra-party struggle separate from the context in which it took place; one could only assert as axiomatic the pervasiveness of class struggle even to the extent that a political party may not be immune from its influence, and that such influence may (depending on the historical centrality of the party) have subsequent historical consequences which could only be revealed by a specific analysis. Mao appears to have regarded the political party in a socialist social system as an important determinant of state activity. Indeed, in the case of Yugoslavia, Mao's analysis gives the impression that the state was in large part the creature of the party, the developments occurring within the party (as a consequence of developments in the wider social context) causally preceding related changes in state structure and

91. IYASC, p. 37.

function. Such an intimate connection between political party and state would seem to flow from the class character of both organizations; in an historical context in which the party was the politically organized expression of the dominant class, it would follow that it should (theoretically speaking) be promoting the same interests as the state. In a socialist social system, however, the party would appear to possess the capacity to cause significant changes within the institutions of the state.

In a revolutionary context, the party of the oppressed class(es) had, as its major objective, the seizure and destruction of the state; "Marxism-Leninism consistently holds", asserted the Twenty Five Points of 1963, "that the central question in all revolutions is that of state power".⁹² It needs be pointed out here that the two main antagonists in any revolutionary situation, party and state, were both elements of the superstructure in Mao's schema. While Mao regarded a revolution as an extensive and at times violent form of class struggle which could manifest itself variously, it is quite clear that he perceived the organized and conscious struggle of the vanguard of the oppressed class at a political level as one of its most significant features. It follows that such a struggle, leading to the final culmination of the revolutionary drama in which the state was overthrown, was necessarily played out in the superstructure of society (and this notion will be examined more fully subsequently). Mao would not, however, have entertained the notion that either state or party could spontaneously or independently initiate such a revolutionary situation; "We have always maintained that a revolutionary situation cannot be made at will unless a revolutionary situation objectively

92. MDOCC, p. 252; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 11.

exists".⁹³ But once such a revolutionary situation did exist, the role of the party within the superstructure could become central. It is in this sense that Mao could point out that "the historical experience of China and Russia proves that to win the revolution a mature party is a most important condition".⁹⁴ A revolutionary party could facilitate (or hinder as Mao had observed in 1927) the process of revolution; it could not, however, substitute itself for that revolutionary process.⁹⁵

While Mao perceived the state and the political realm (including political parties) as important features of the superstructure, much of his attention during the post-cooperativization period centred on the origin, nature and function of ideology within the "social system". This preoccupation was in part a continuation of his keen interest of Yan'an days in the nature and function of "culture" in historical development. However, the basic resolution of the problem of ownership plus the persistence of problems of an ideological character, combined to create an environment in which his attention was increasingly drawn to this area of the superstructure.

Mao's frequent references to ideology as a principal feature of the superstructure⁹⁶ suggest that he utilized the concept of ideology in several different though related ways. Firstly, Mao utilized the term to denote the variety of attitudes, opinions and general perceptions which emerged from within a class. On the occasions Mao

93. PRKR, p. 38.

94. COSE, p. 37; Miscellany II, p. 250; Wansui (1967), p. 171; Wansui (1969), p. 323.

95. See also USW, p. 258; Wansui (1969), p. 111.

96. SW V, pp. 338, 395, 460, 464; XJ V, p. 319, 374, 443-4, 447; also USW, pp. 259, 262; Wansui (1969), pp. 112, 115; also Miscellany I, p. 130; Wansui (1969), p. 248; also Miscellany I, p. 189; Wansui (1967), p. 121.

employed the term "ideology" to refer to ideology in this inchoate state, the concept did not incorporate any assumption that such ideology constituted an entirely systematic body of thought characterized by a complete internal congruence. Such an assumption would necessitate a view of class as a rigidly homogeneous social aggregate which, because of a complete identity of characterizing shared socio-economic attributes amongst its members, would necessarily result in an absolute homogeneity of perceptions and attitudes concerning the nature of the world. This view of ideology had not been Lenin's; witness his emphasis on the limited capacity of the members of the working class to perceive beyond the immediate context of the industrial struggle, such limited capacity necessitating a leadership whose horizons were not confined by the factory gates. Likewise, such a view of ideology was not Mao's. Although he did not regard the ideology of a class at this level as completely open-ended or without a substantial centre of gravity, Mao's sensitivity to the possibilities for differentiation within the socio-economic characteristics defining a class lent him a concomitant sensitivity to the possibilities for differentiation in attitudes, perceptions, opinions and aspirations which could emanate from individuals defined as objectively members of that class. Such differentiation could result from such factors as regional and geographical limits on certain forms of economic activity, occupational diversity along trade and craft lines within a class, and the actual level of physical concentration of a population with shared socio-economic characteristics. During the Yan'an period, Mao's sensitivity to the possibility of intra-class differentiation had prompted him to employ the concept of "stratum" to facilitate a more accurate analysis of the nature of a class; this sensitivity

not only persisted after 1955, but was heightened to incorporate the existence of "social groups" within the class structure.⁹⁷ Such strata and social groups could give rise to a variety of opinions and attitudes, and it was in part to facilitate the expression of such opinions and attitudes that Mao embarked on the ill-fated Hundred Flowers experiment. As Mao was to point out in his key-note speech of 27 February 1957, "Different classes, strata and social groups each have their own views on what are fragrant flowers and what are poisonous weeds".⁹⁸

Moreover, the fact that the mass-line continued to play a central role in Mao's thought indicates that he still perceived the ideas and opinions of the members of a class as "scattered and unsystematic", and requiring systematization before they could constitute ideology in the second sense in which Mao employed the term; that is, as a means of describing the world outlook of a class. It is at this level that Mao began to perceive a greater degree of systematization and internal congruence in the ideology of a class. Such a level of systematization was not inherent in ideology in its inchoate state of development, but was attained by the application of such procedures as the mass-line which could determine and refine core values and attitudes shared by members (or groups or strata) of a class. Here again, the emphasis is on an inductive approach; the utilization of such techniques as the mass-line, when properly employed, served in the first instance to disclose the variation in attitudes and opinions, and by so doing, to reveal the shared attitudes and opinions which constituted the ideological centre of gravity of

97. SW V, p. 385; XJ V, p. 364; also COSE, pp. 71-2; Miscellany II, 273; Wansui (1967), p. 199; Wansui (1969), p. 351; also PR No. 23 (2 June) 1967, p. 8.

98. SW V, p. 412; XJ V, p. 393.

the class. The world outlook or ideology of a class thus found its initial source of inspiration from the "scattered and unsystematic" opinions within a class. The fact that Mao perceived this division between ideology at a sub-class (individual, group, stratum) and class level is indicated by his belief that the contemporary political environment was characterized by only two opposing world outlooks:

...on the matter of world outlooks, there are basically only two schools in our time, the proletarian, and the bourgeois. It is one or the other, either the proletarian or the bourgeois world outlook. The communist world outlook is the world outlook of the proletariat and of no other class. 99

While the proletarian world outlook might represent the ideology of the proletariat *qua* class, Mao was under no illusion that the individual members of the proletariat necessarily comprehended or identified completely with the ideology at this level. For the world outlook, to employ a statistical analogy, constituted the mean or median of attitudes and opinions within a class; the formulation of a mean, however, presupposed a range falling on either side of that mean and extending to an extremity. Thus, the ideology as world outlook could represent a frame of reference (both statistically and axiologically) for individuals, groups and strata within that class. It is not inconceivable, moreover, that Mao perceived the extremity of the range of opinions and attitudes within a class as extending somewhat into the range of opinions and attitudes more characteristic of another class. Such overlapping could derive from the extensive possibilities for socio-economic variation within a class, and the influence of historical development in each particular case. Mao

99. SW V, p. 427; XJ V, p. 409.

certainly did not view a class as a totally discrete social category, and the possibility of some overlap, leading to a degree of confusion of attitudes, perceptions and loyalties, seems to have been, for Mao, eminently feasible.

This distinction Mao perceived between ideology in its inchoate state of development (at a sub-class level) and ideology as a world outlook characteristic of a class, provided the rationale which informed Mao's hortatory declarations on the need for remoulding of attitudes and opinions. Such exhortations applied even to members of the working class itself;¹⁰⁰ for being an individual member of the working class was no guarantee that one's personal ideology was not some distance from the ideology of that class as a whole. Thus, a movement of attitudes within a class was both possible and feasible, as well as desirable. If, however, attitudes within the proletariat varied around an ideological mean and could (by the employment of certain techniques) be encouraged towards that mean, would it not therefore be possible to employ those same techniques or others¹⁰¹ to encourage a movement of attitude on the part of those in other classes, not towards the ideological mean of their own class, but towards that of the proletariat itself? Mao's response to this question seems to have been a qualified affirmative. His belief in the potential for remoulding (*gaizao*) was not limited to intra-class movement of attitude, but encompassed the possibility of a qualitative transformation as a person objectively from one class came to identify with the world outlook of another class. Mao believed, however, that certain predisposing and facilitating socio-economic factors acted as the

100. SW V, p. 402; XJ V, p. 382.

101. See *Ibid.* for a distinction in the techniques to be used in remoulding the former exploiting classes as opposed to the working class.

premise for a successful transformation of class allegiance and ideology. As we have seen, his frequent exhortations to intellectuals from the old society to remould was predicated upon a belief that the destruction of their social and economic base with the change in the ownership system facilitated the abandonment of their former class attitudes and the adoption of a proletarian world outlook.¹⁰² It is quite wrong, however, to assume that, because Mao indicated the possibility of such a change in ideology and class allegiance, that he assumed it to be a simple process or one guaranteed of success. On the contrary, Mao was convinced that attitudes were stubborn and displayed a resistance to change, even after the objective conditions which had given rise to such attitudes had long disappeared;¹⁰³ "Our comrades must understand", he declared in March 1957, "that ideological remoulding involves long-term, patient and painstaking work, and they must not attempt to change people's ideology, which has been shaped by decades of life, by giving a few lectures or holding a few meetings".¹⁰⁴ And in his Reading Notes of the early 1960s Mao returned to this theme; "Our experience shows that remoulding is difficult. Those who do not undergo persistent repeated struggle can not be properly remoulded".¹⁰⁵ Thus, a predisposing change in the objective environment plus persistent and painstaking efforts at remoulding could be necessary to initiate the desired change. Yet, despite Mao's appreciation of the difficulties involved, it is clear that he regarded the attempt to actualize the potential for change in

102. See SW V, pp. 404, 469, 504; XJ V, pp. 384, 452-3, 487; also Miscellany I, p. 107; Wansui (1969), p. 207.

103. SW V, p. 469; XJ V, p. 453; also USW, p. 161; Wansui (1969), p. 102.

104. SW V, p. 432; XJ V, p. 415.

105. COSE, p. 41; Miscellany II, p. 253; Wansui (1967), p. 174; Wansui (1969), p. 326.

ideology and class allegiance as an important feature in the socialist transformation of society.¹⁰⁶

The third sense in which Mao employed the concept of ideology was as a means of identifying what might be called the structural aspects of ideology. In contradistinction to the actual ideas at a sub-class or class level were the structures within the superstructure of society which were informed and inspired by ideology and which in turn promoted ideology and class interest. Notable amongst these ideological structures during the late 1950's were the organs of the media, and there was no equivocation on Mao's part in asserting their ideological and class character. In July 1957, in an aggressive speech in Shanghai entitled Beat Back the Attacks of the Bourgeois Rightists, Mao emphasized that the press in particular was such an ideological structure:

The system embraces not only ownership, it also includes the superstructure, primarily the state apparatus and ideology. For instance, the press comes within the scope of ideology. Some people say that the press has no class nature and is not an instrument of class struggle. They are mistaken. Until at least the extinction of imperialism the press and everything else in the realm of ideology will reflect class relations.¹⁰⁷

Likewise, in an article published anonymously in Renmin ribao (People's Daily) on June 14 of that year, Mao had asserted that the nature of the press in any country was a function of that country's economy and class struggle; as a result, "while class differences exist, the press will...always serve as a tool for use in the class struggle".¹⁰⁸ This view of the press also extended to books which were, Mao argued, "ideological" (*guannian xingtai*) in character.¹⁰⁹

106. SW V, p. 460; XJ V, p. 443.

107. SW V, p. 460; XJ V, pp. 443-4; cf. USW, p. 259; Wansui (1969), p. 112.

108. USW, pp. 215-6, 220.

109. Wansui (1969), p. 242.

Also listed amongst the ideological structures of the superstructure were education,¹¹⁰ literature and art,¹¹¹ and such aspects of state policy as economic planning which were manifestly informed by ideology, and which had as their purpose the promotion of class interests.¹¹² All of these structures "fall within the scope of ideology, belong to the superstructure and have a class nature".¹¹³

At this point, it is worth noting that language, the medium through which ideology was expressed, did not, in Mao's opinion, *ipso facto* possess a class character. Language as such, although a product of society, was not restricted in usage to any particular class. This supra-class characteristic of language was indicated by Mao in his Shanghai speech of July 1957:

Like language, it (*da zi bao*) has no class nature. We all speak in the vernacular and so does Chiang Kai-shek. We no longer speak literary Chinese exemplified by sayings like-- "Great pleasure is derived from learning and constantly reviewing what has been learned" and "Welcoming friends from afar gives one great delight". The vernacular is used by the proletariat and by the bourgeoisie.¹¹⁴

In so asserting language to possess a supra-class quality, Mao appeared to be merely echoing Stalin's position on linguistics.¹¹⁵

110. SW V, p. 460; XJ V, pp. 443-4.

111. Ibid.; also Miscellany I, p. 44; Wansui (1969), p. 71.

112. COSE, p. 76; Miscellany II, p. 276; Wansui (1967), pp. 203-4; Wansui (1969), p. 355.

113. SW V, p. 460; XJ V, pp. 443-4.

114. SW V, p. 464; XJ V, p. 448; cf. USW, p. 262; Wansui (1969), p. 116.

115. For Stalin's views on this subject, see J.V. Stalin, Marxism and Problems of Linguistics (Peking: FLP, 1972). In speaking of language, Marx also seemed to attribute it with a supra-class quality; "Language itself is just as much the product of a community, as in another respect it is the existence of the community; it is, as it were, the communal being speaking for itself". (Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations, Op. cit., p. 88)

In fact, during his Chengdu talks of 1958, Mao had endorsed Stalin's position by declaring the Leninist foundation of his writings on linguistics to be basically correct.¹¹⁶ As a result, it would follow that language *per se* could not, because of its supra-class quality, be included in the superstructure of society, all elements of which had a class nature. Needless to say, Mao was very conscious that the judicious use of language could promote the interests of a class (although it was not the prerogative of any one class); both content and style could be altered to enhance a particular position. In fact, the only real benefit Mao believed he had obtained from his own traditional education was this ability to utilize language as a medium for effectively presenting a point of view; "None of the stuff I had learned in thirteen years was any good for making revolution. I used only the instrument--language (*wenzi*). Writing essays is an instrument. As for the content of my studies, I didn't use it at all".¹¹⁷

During the Yan'an period, Mao had devoted close attention to the role "culture" played in facilitating historical changes initiated in the politico-economic sectors of society. Mao's heightened interest in ideology and the superstructure after 1955 was, in some respects, a continuation of that attention. In a subsequent section, we will return to examine whether the degree of historical effectivity he attributed to the superstructure was consonant with his views on the role of "culture" of Yan'an days. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to move beyond the scope of the "social system" (as Mao defined it), and outline and briefly analyze Mao's perception of the

116. MTTU, p. 115; Wansui (1969), p. 174.

117. MTTU, p. 214; Wansui (1969), pp. 549-50.

forces of production.

Although it may seem somewhat unusual to assert the forces of production as external to the 'social system' proper in Mao's thinking, there is both textual evidence internal to the Mao texts and historical precedent within the Marxist tradition for such an assertion.

Firstly, in terms of textual evidence, on no occasion did Mao explicitly incorporate the forces of production within his concept of the "social system";¹¹⁸ nor did he include the forces of production within the economic base which, as we have seen, was basically the system of ownership.¹¹⁹ In fact, Mao appears to have been somewhat diffident in tackling (at a theoretical level) the question of the nature of the productive forces, this reticence stemming in some part from his admitted lack of ability in comprehending the technical aspects of production; in his important speech of 30 January 1962, he confessed that "I have paid rather more attention to problems relating to the relations of production, to the system. When it comes to the productive forces, I know very little".¹²⁰ In his Reading Notes of the early 1960s he had also complained that "If the study of the productive forces goes too far it becomes technology and natural science",¹²¹ subjects which Mao had admitted (in September 1959) to knowing very little about.¹²² As a result, he conceded that he understood little of the complexities of industry, industrial planning or economic construction.¹²³

118. See for example, SW V, p. 460; XJ V, p. 443.

119. See for example, SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 319.

120. TEWC, p. 22; ZKDDZY, p. 22; also in MTTU, p. 176; Wansui (1969), p. 414.

121. COSE, p. 82; Miscellany II, p. 280; Wansui (1967), p. 208; Wansui (1969), p. 360.

122. MTTU, p. 154; Wansui (1967), pp. 99-100.

123. Miscellany I, p. 96; Wansui (1969), p. 192; also MTTU, pp. 142-3; Wansui (1969), p. 302.

Secondly, it would seem that Mao's separation of the 'social system' from the forces of production owes something to the position articulated by Stalin in several important documents of the early 1950s, works with which Mao was obviously familiar.¹²⁴ In Marxism and Problems of Linguistics, Stalin asserted on several occasions that language was analogous to the forces of production (and in particular to the instruments of production) in so far as it had a non-class or supra-class characteristic. Language and productive forces (such as machines) were consequently both "indifferent to classes" and thus capable of serving the interests of very different types of society.¹²⁵ Stalin's imputation of a non-class character to the forces of production would thus appear to sanction a conceptual separation of the productive forces and the 'social system'. For if, as Stalin suggested, each element of the social system is imbued with class characteristics and the productive forces are not, a clear distinction between them becomes necessary based on the fundamental criterion of class character. Moreover, in both this document and Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., Stalin implies that the economic base is equivalent to the relations of production and not the productive forces; "every social formation, socialist society not excluded, has its economic foundation, consisting of the sum total of men's relations of production."¹²⁶ Indeed, in terms of his own logic, Stalin's position on the non-class character of the productive forces necessitates that they be excluded from the economic base which was clearly characterized by class relations.

As we have observed, several important features of Mao's definition of the various elements of society owe something to formulations previously articulated by Stalin. Although this may appear to detract from the originality of Mao's own theoretical position, it will become

124. Miscellany I. pp. 189-200, 235.

125. Marxism and Problems of Linguistics, Op.cit., pp. 6-7, 34-5.

126. Op.cit., p. 66; see also Marxism and ..., Op.cit., pp. 8-9.

evident that he was to utilize these features of Stalin's position in an innovative manner capable of explaining the particularities of China's own pattern of historical development. Indeed, it seems that Mao's unwillingness to include the forces of production within the 'social system' proper derived, not only from these formulations by Stalin, but from his reading of the events which had precipitated the Chinese Revolution itself.

It was obvious to Mao that China's revolution had taken place in a backward society with extremely underdeveloped forces of production. If revolution had to attend upon major developments and expansion of the forces of production, then the possibility of revolution in China was a marginal one indeed, and a goal only for the distant future. If, however, the large-scale transformation of the forces of production was a result of, rather than previous to, revolutionary changes within the relations of production and superstructure, then revolution might be an imminent possibility even in such a backward society as China. The advanced "social system" created by such a revolution would then proceed to develop its backward forces of production, and create the environment which would permit and facilitate its rapid transformation. In order to legitimize the experience of the Chinese revolution, it was therefore important for Mao to theoretically and conceptually divorce the forces of production from the "social system" astride it. Mao's exclusion of the forces of production from the "social system" does not, however, betoken that Mao discounted the forces of production as a generative factor in historical causation. On the contrary, and as we shall see, Mao still insisted that developments within the forces of production were the precursor of changes within the "social system"; such developments, however, need be only diminutive, mere "sprouts" of an alternative economic system. It will be demonstrated that, rather than being a sop to his Menshevizing critics, Mao's insistence on such "sprouts" derived from a theoretical conviction of the importance of such developments within the forces of production to the causal sequence described by society in its progression through time.

Despite Mao's reticence on the nature of the forces of production, he still held certain opinions on what constituted their constituent elements; and if we are to gain an insight into his views on social activity and historical causation generally, the task of extricating and analyzing such opinions remains a necessary one. In his address to the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee held in November 1956, Mao referred to the productive forces as consisting of two factors:

The productive forces consist of two factors, labourers and tools. If we do not suppress counter-revolutionaries, the working people would be unhappy. So would the oxen and the hoes, and even the land would feel uncomfortable (*bu shufu*), all because the peasants who put the oxen and hoes and land to use would be unhappy. 127

Later in the same speech, Mao was to repeat that the "productive forces consist of two factors: one is man and the other tools".¹²⁸ It will be noticed, however, that in the previous quotation Mao also alluded to "land" in a manner which suggests that he considered such physical elements as included in his conception of the productive forces. This impression is given substance if we turn to a document whose date is uncertain (possibly 1964), in which Mao extended his definition of the productive forces to incorporate such factors:

Man is the foremost factor among such factors as productive forces. Man, means of labour (including animal labour, farm implements, fertilizers), and objects of labour constitute the three great elements of productive forces. 129

This tripartite division of the forces of production almost

127. SW V, p. 337; XJ V, p. 317.

128. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 319.

129. Miscellany II, p. 435; Wansui (1969), p. 604.

exactly parallels the division employed by Marx (in Capital, Volume One) to distinguish the three different elements of the labour process, and it is possible that this constituted Mao's source of reference here.¹³⁰ In contradistinction to Marx's sophisticated analysis, however, Mao gives the impression that he perceived the forces of production in rather more general terms. In his article "The Situation in the Summer of 1957" (July 1957), Mao referred to industry and agriculture as the basic features of the productive forces in the Chinese context:

We must understand that, counting from now, ten to fifteen years will be required to build a modern industrial and modern agricultural base in China. Only when the productive forces of our society have been fairly adequately developed over a period of ten to fifteen years will it be possible to regard our socialist economic and political system as having obtained a fairly adequate material base (now far from adequate), and will it be possible to regard our state (the superstructure) as fully consolidated and our socialist society as fundamentally built. ¹³¹

It seems probable from this that Mao regarded the forces of production as the "material base" (*wuzhi jichu*), as the type or mode of economic production which acted as the foundation upon which society was rooted and from which it obtained sustenance. What must be emphasized is that Mao did not regard this "material base" as merely the level or type of technology which informed economic activity; on the contrary, Mao regarded man *qua* labourer as the "foremost factor" (*shouyao yinsu*) of the forces of production. It will become evident as our analysis unfolds that this preeminent role of man within the forces of production was, for Mao, the key factor, the operational

130. Capital I, Op. cit., p. 284.

131. SW V, p. 479; XJ V, p. 462.

hinge, upon which developments within both the "social system" and this "material base" depended.¹³²

Utilizing our reconstruction of Mao's perception of the aspects of the "social system" and the forces of production, let us now turn to an analysis of the causation sequence; the manner in which these elements of society were interrelated causally to generate change and development.

During the Yan'an period, Mao had perceived society as constituted of several major sectors to which he ascribed varying levels of effectivity in terms of historical causation. Although our analysis indicates that, in some regards, he put rather more detail on his perception of society after 1955, it remains a fact that Mao continued to view society in what might be called global terms; that is, he employed generic terms to describe major social categories and, despite a concession that such categories were comprised of various constituent social structures and elements of varying dimension and importance, tended to attribute to each of such categories (with some important exceptions) a virtual unanimity of function in historical causation. Although Mao genuinely believed that "society is very complex",¹³³ his response to such complexity was to resist the temptation of an empiricist reductionism in favour of a social analysis which incorporated but submerged that complexity beneath global

132. For example, the Twenty Five Points of 1963 asserted "Marxist-Leninists attach importance to the role of technological change, but it is wrong to belittle the role of man and exaggerate the role of technology". MDOCC, p. 260; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 15.

133. MTU, p. 216; Miscellany II, p. 387; Wansui (1969), p. 551.

categorizations. The utilization of such a social analysis was not, as far as Mao was concerned, in any contradiction with his continued insistence on the employment of an inductionist methodology;¹³⁴ for the existence of such broad social categories had been demonstrated (to Mao's own satisfaction) on numerous instances both at a direct and indirect level of experience. Subsequently, if he painted with a broad brush in depicting society and social function, it was because he and others had come before and etched in the detail which permitted those broad strokes.

From our analysis it has emerged that Mao perceived society as comprised of three major categories; the relations of production (or economic base), the superstructure, and the forces of production. The combination of the relations of production plus the superstructure constituted the "social system" which had as its foundation the "material base" comprised of the forces of production. It is the purpose of this section to analyze Mao's views on the nature of the relationship between these areas of society, and attempt to isolate the degree of influence in historical causation which he attributed to each.

It might be expected from the emphasis given to problems of the superstructure during the post-1955 period that Mao perceived this sector of society as the most influential in terms of effectivity in historical causation. Likewise, from the limited theoretical attention he devoted to the forces of production it might be suspected that he found less to justify an historical method which placed a heavy emphasis on the historically-generative capacity of this

134. See especially COSE, p. 108; Miscellany II, p. 300; Wansui (1967), p. 231; Wansui (1969), p. 383.

sector. If such expectations were found to be substantiated, it would indicate a significant retreat on Mao's part from what could realistically be termed a "materialist" explanation of history; that is, Mao would, by stressing ideological and other superstructural elements at the expense of strictly economic factors, be altering the locus traditionally attributed with primacy in historical causation. While it is certainly true that Mao devoted as much attention to the superstructure as he did little to the forces of production, this does not however betoken such a retreat. It must be here again asserted that the increased attention devoted to the superstructure was, in large part, a function of the challenges which emerged from that quarter, and that the possibility for this increased attention was predicated upon a perception of the less acute challenge posed from the "material base" because of the success of the revolution in 1949 and the years of consolidation that followed. If, therefore, we are to abstract a notional model of Mao's view of historical causation during this period, some allowance must be made for this bias of attention bestowed on the nature and function of the superstructure. If such an allowance is not made, it is possible to fall into the trap of failing to situate isolated comments or analyses into a wider methodological approach presumed by Mao as qualifying such comments or analyses; for many of Mao's remarks during this period appear to assert the overriding importance of superstructural factors (and especially ideology) in the historical process.¹³⁵ These latter will, however, give a distorted conception of Mao's position if the precaution is not taken of fixing such statements

135. See particularly Mao's discussion on ideology in his February 1957 speech, SW V, pp. 408-414; XJ V, pp. 388-395; also the influence of such ideological features as "planning" in his Reading Notes, COSE, p. 76; Miscellany II, p. 276; Wansui (1967), pp. 203-4; Wansui (1969), p. 355.

into the context of his general methodological approach to the analysis of the historical process. The necessity for such a precaution will become evident if we turn our attention firstly to the position of the forces of production in this notional model of historical causation.

In November 1956, Mao referred to the forces of production as "the most revolutionary factor. When the productive forces have developed there is bound to be a revolution".¹³⁶ Moreover, the possibility that the forces of production might advance rapidly (*pao de kuai*) resulting in an imbalance between them and the relations of production and the superstructure, and thus impelling society forward, was also raised in his Reading Notes of the early 1960s.¹³⁷ In these two sources, developments within the forces of production seem to be identified as the factor leading to changes in other major sectors of society. While the nature of the influence emanating from the forces of production could only become manifest through the historical mediation of the other sectors of society, and while the path of this influence was circular rather than direct or uni-directional (and these qualifications will be explored subsequently), there are grounds for believing that the forces of production constituted the primal generative source of the imbalance which motivated the mechanics of social function. As Mao was to point out in his Reading Notes, "the productive forces are always advancing, therefore there is always imbalance".¹³⁸ Such imbalance resulted from the ceaseless development of the capacity of man as labourer to exploit nature:

136. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 319.

137. COSE, p. 81; Miscellany II, p. 280; Wansui (1967), p. 208; Wansui (1969), pp. 359-360.

138. Ibid.

In the fields of the struggle for production and scientific experiment, mankind makes constant progress and nature undergoes constant change; they never remain at the same level. Therefore, man has constantly to sum up experiences and go on discovering, inventing, creating and advancing.¹³⁹

This ceaseless development within the forces of production was a function of the "human factor" having, in Mao's opinion, a limitless potential to develop those skills and instruments necessary for the expropriation of nature's abundance; "Human knowledge and the capacity to transform nature have no limit...What cannot now be done, may be done in the future".¹⁴⁰ It is important to point out that, while Mao regarded man as the catalyst initiating the development of the productive forces, it was man in the role of labourer, intimately involved in the immediate process of production, the labour process proper, who was attributed with this capacity. For (as we have seen) Mao did not regard the forces of production as some dehumanized technological apparatus from which man was excluded; by the same token, however, Mao's emphasis on man as the "foremost factor" must be qualified by this insistence that "man" in the context of the forces of production presumed the role *qua* labourer which excluded other social functions and roles. Without this separation and denotation of man's various roles in Mao's schema, confusion may arise over the origin and sequence of historical influence between the different sectors of society. Mao, of course, paid great attention to the "human factor", and man without doubt constituted the common factor, the social mechanism permitting the imperative of imbalance to be perceived and resolved; yet, it was man in his varying roles,

139. PR No. 26 (23 June) 1967, p. 2.

140. COSE, p. 137; Miscellany I, p. 192; Wansui (1967), p. 157.

his differing social capacities, which permitted the concatenation of the various sectors of society, and for changes and developments in one to be translated into another. In his speech to the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee in November 1956, Mao was to emphasize that it was through man, through the "human factor", that changes within the forces of production were translated throughout the rest of the social system:

The productive forces consist of two factors: one is man and the other tools. Tools are made by men. When tools call for a revolution, they will speak through men, through the labourers, who will destroy the old relations of production and the old social relations.¹⁴¹

In the same address, Mao also asserted that "if the super-structure (ideology and public opinion included) protects the kind of relations of production the people dislike, they will transform it".¹⁴² It will be remembered that Mao described the superstructure as being "social relations of another kind",¹⁴³ and it would seem evident from this that he regarded the operation of the superstructure as a function of the activities of men in other roles, that is, functioning in "social relations" different from those defined by the class or economic administrative factors within the relations of production.

While Mao regarded the forces of production as in ceaseless development, he did not regard the tempo of that development as even or constant in degree. Notwithstanding the limitless potential of

141. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 319.

142. Ibid.

143. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 319.

man to exploit nature, that potential could not maintain a balanced rate of development, for the actualization of that potential was subject to inhibitions and temporary setbacks. Such inhibitions emanated from the limitations imposed on the productive forces by the relations of production, most notably an ownership system which militated against the full development of the capacity and potential inherent in the productive forces. At certain stages in the development of the productive forces, the relations of production tended to act as a brake to further development, and an imbalance was thereby created.¹⁴⁴ Mao believed that in the context of contemporary China, the existence of a differentiated ownership system would become a major inhibiting factor impeding the further development of the forces of production:

In the same way prolonged coexistence of ownership by the whole people with ownership by the collectives is bound to become less and less adaptable to the development of the productive forces and will fail to satisfy the ever increasing needs of peasant consumption and agricultural production or of industry for raw materials. ¹⁴⁵

In fact, it appears clear that Mao continued to employ the

144. For example, one of Mao's commentaries in Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside (1955) asserts that

Since elementary co-operatives maintain a system of semi-private ownership, with the passage of time this will hamper the development of the productive forces and people will begin to demand a change in the system of ownership...Once the productive forces are further freed, production will expand even more. (SW V, p. 275; XV J, p. 259; SUICC, p. 477).

Note that, here again, it is the people who constitute the social mechanism perceiving the imbalance and working towards its resolution.

145. COSE, p. 54; Miscellany II, p. 261; Wansui (1967), p. 185; Wansui (1969), p. 336.

Marxist concept of the relations of production becoming a "fetter" on the further development of the productive forces.¹⁴⁶ What is obviously distinct about Mao's usage of the concept is, as we have seen above, that he continued to apply that concept in analyzing and describing the relationship between the forces and relations of production under socialism. Elsewhere in his Reading Notes, Mao was again to utilize the concept; "...under socialism...problems of the ownership system itself (e.g., the two types of ownership)...may hinder the development of the productive forces".¹⁴⁷ However, while Mao acknowledged that such a situation could arise under socialism, he appeared to make a distinction between the imbalance created between the forces and relations of production under capitalism, and that under socialism. Under the latter, the relationship between the two sectors was characterized not only by contradiction, but conformity; "The socialist system and the productive forces are fundamentally in conformity (*shihé*), but they also have areas where there is not total conformity".¹⁴⁸ The reason for this "conformity" was that the development of the productive forces was a primary objective of the socialist system,¹⁴⁹ and a major purpose of the Chinese revolution.¹⁵⁰ It was precisely for this reason that Mao could not accept the formulation of the Eighth Congress of the CCP, which stressed only the contradiction between the social system and the productive forces.¹⁵¹ But while he may have objected to this one-sided

146. See for example, SW V, pp. 275, 397; XJ V, pp. 259, 377; SUICC, p. 477.

147. COSE, p. 70; Miscellany II, p. 272; Wansui (1967), p. 198; Wansui (1969), p. 350.

148. Miscellany I, p. 75; Wansui (1969), p. 126.

149. Miscellany I, p. 76; Wansui (1969), p. 126.

150. COSE, p. 41; Miscellany II, p. 253; Wansui (1967), p. 174; Wansui (1969), p. 326.

151. USW, p. 167; Miscellany I, p. 69; Wansui (1969), p. 107.

formulation, it is clear that Mao still perceived the contradiction between the forces and relations of production resulting from an imbalance in their respective rates of development, as a crucial factor precipitating movement and change within society as a whole. As a result, he was moved to comment in his Reading Notes that "contradictions between the productive forces and the production relations unfold without interruption. Relations of production that once were adapted (*shihé*) to the productive forces will no longer be so after a period of time".¹⁵² Nevertheless, the perception that both conformity and contradiction existed between the forces and relations of production under socialism was a significant factor in modifying the intensity of the consequence of the imbalance, and the extent of the "revolutions" that Mao insisted would continue even under a socialist regime.

The failure of the relations of production to keep abreast of developments in the "material base" of society thus created a situation of imbalance, a contradiction in the social fabric, which would have to be resolved before a further development of the forces of production was possible. The immediate resolution of this imbalance was not, however, feasible or possible without concomitant changes elsewhere in the "social system". For the alteration of the ownership system, mutual relations, and the distribution system, could not proceed without changes in the superstructure of society whose function it was to maintain and defend the extant status of those three elements of the relations of production. It is at this point in the sequence of causation that the interrelatedness of the various

152. COSE, p. 54; Miscellany II, p. 261; Wansui (1967), p. 185; Wansui (1969), p. 336.

aspects and sectors of society discloses itself as the factor causing the amplification of the influence of developments within the forces of production throughout society as a whole. Mao makes it quite clear that prior to a change in the relations of production, developments in the forces of production are necessarily limited, and only with such a change (with the "unshakling of the fetters") could the productive forces make large-scale progress, or in Mao's own terminology, a "leap forward".¹⁵³ Because of this disproportionate scale of advance in the productive forces, the initial developments in that sector may appear diminutive in contrast to the resultant consequences throughout the "social system", and Mao makes such a contrast in his Reading Notes.¹⁵⁴ The amplification throughout the "social system" of these perhaps diminutive developments in the "material base" results therefore from the interrelatedness of society, and in particular from the fact that the relations of production (with which the forces of production are in a state of imbalance), through the existence of contradictions within those relations, are also in contention with the superstructure of the "social system".

At this point in our reconstruction of Mao's ratiocination, it is necessary to assert that the contradictions within the relations of production may differ according to the relative configuration of their constituent elements at any given historical moment. From our previous analysis of such elements it emerged that there was no necessarily axiomatic relationship between the ownership system, the mutual relations and the distribution system within the relations of

153. See COSE, pp. 51, 66, 93; Miscellany II, pp. 259-60, 269, 280; Wansui (1967), pp. 182-3, 194-5, 218; Wansui (1969), pp. 334, 346, 370.

154. COSE, p. 66; Miscellany II, p. 269; Wansui (1967), pp. 194-5; Wansui (1969), p. 346.

production, although it appeared that the ownership system, being the principal feature, was likely to define the limits within which such a relationship would be made manifest. Thus, while once again there would be conformity between these elements of the relations of production, there could also be contradiction. Likewise, the pervasiveness of class and class struggle within Mao's perception of the historical process also suggests that the contradictions characterizing the relations of production (and especially its ownership system) could well be of a class nature; but here again, the precise formulation of those contradictions would vary according to the specific historical situation. In his brief (though theoretically important) analysis of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, Mao indicated that class antagonisms could dominate the contradictions in the relations of production in an historical situation in which an emergent class (in this case the bourgeoisie) had been brought into existence by developments within the forces of production.¹⁵⁵ Class relations were thereby established which were a threat to, or in contradiction with, the class relations characterizing the dominant class. In such a context, the contradiction within the relations of production manifested itself as a hostile clash of antagonistic classes. However, the fact that Mao included the administration of economic enterprises within his conception of the relations of production,¹⁵⁶ suggests that (especially under socialism) contradictions might also emerge from such factors as inappropriate management techniques and enterprise organization, or mistakes in planning leading to tensions within the mutual relations amongst the labour force itself.

155. Ibid.

156. COSE, pp. 111-112; Miscellany II, p. 302; Wansui (1967), p. 234; Wansui (1969), p. 386.

Whatever the nature of the contradiction, its resolution could not be a function solely of changes within the relations of production; for the superstructural edifice of the "social system" was a "reflection" of those relations (and especially class relations),¹⁵⁷ and its principal aspect normally functioned to preserve and defend the relative positions of the aspects of the contradiction within the relations of production. One aspect of such a contradiction within the relations of production (for example, a newly emergent class as in the case of the bourgeoisie given above, or the pressure from an enterprise labour force on a resistant management to adapt organization and policy to better suit innovations in production techniques) was therefore necessarily in a state of contention not only with its opposing aspect within the relations of production, but also with those elements of the superstructure which functioned to maintain the relative superiority of its opposite number. There was, therefore, a relationship of interdependence between developments within productive relations and the nature and function of the superstructure.¹⁵⁸ Consequently, at this stage in the causation sequence, certain elements of the superstructure appear to play a conservative role, functioning as an agent inhibiting the resolution of contradictions within the relations of production, which in turn serves to impede the further development of the forces of production.

The superstructure could function in a conservative capacity in several different ways. Firstly, the significance Mao attached to the state as a feature of the superstructure, stemmed from his belief that the coercive apparatus at the state's behest constituted a most

157. See for example, SW V, p. 460; XJ V, pp. 443-4.

158. SW V, p. 395; XJ V, p. 374.

significant obstacle to change. These organs of coercion had as their function the maintenance of the superiority of the dominant class, and consequently the state could, in certain historical contexts, become the most obvious target in the struggle to find a resolution of class contradictions within the relations of production. A significant feature of such (revolutionary) contexts was the struggle between the political party of an emergent or oppressed class and the state itself; the contention between aspects of the contradiction within the relations of production could therefore make itself manifest within the superstructure in the attempt to remove the impediment to further progress.

Secondly, Mao perceived that ideology, in its various manifestations, could function to inhibit developments within the relations of production. Ideology, although by and large a "reflection" of developments within the material world, tended to lag behind those developments, and thus become a conservative reinforcement to those aspects of the relations of production impeding the progress of the productive forces. This notion of a time-lag in ideological "reflection" emerged fairly frequently in Mao's analyses of this period; "Ideology becomes systematic, generally speaking, in the wake of the movement of things. The reason is that thought and understanding are reflections of material movements".¹⁵⁹ The actual time-lag before ideology correctly reflected material movements was indeterminate, but could be "long-term",¹⁶⁰ and this was because man's thinking was only influenced gradually.¹⁶¹ It is important to note that the time-lag for correct ideological reflection might

159. COSE, p. 113; Miscellany II, p. 303; Wansui (1967), p. 235; Wansui (1969), p. 387.

160. Wansui (1969), p. 424.

161. Miscellany I, p. 80; Wansui (1969), p. 148.

vary within a class (let alone across a population of several classes). Mao would not have entertained the notion that all members of a class (or population) would become simultaneously cognizant of the systematized ideology which correctly reflected "material movements"; thus, within a class or population, not only could there be a time-lag for the reflection of that ideology, but the length of that time-lag could vary widely between individuals, or groups and strata within a class or population. As Mao was to point out in his speech at a Conference on Propaganda Work in March 1957:

Changes of such magnitude are of course reflected in people's minds. Man's social being determines his consciousness. These great changes in our social system are reflected differently among people of different classes, strata and social groups. 162

As we have seen, there was no presumption on Mao's part that the concept of class presumed a spontaneous and immediate unanimity of opinion or attitude amongst its members. As a result, an emergent class (for example) could well find itself at a disadvantage in contending with the ideological structures of the superstructure which defended and promoted the position of the dominant class or practices within the relations of production become anachronistic through developments within the forces of production, this disadvantage resulting from the fact that the correct reflection of antecedent material movements may have been uneven amongst its own members. Moreover, the ideology informing the personnel of ideological structures and the bureaucracy of the state was not only relatively more systematized (if increasingly atavistic), but was amplified and propagated in such a fashion as to inhibit the accurate reflection of

162. SW V, p. 422; XJ V, p. 403.

material movements in the thinking of members of that emergent class or the population at large. It is in this context that Mao perceived the necessity for the compensatory technique of attempting to actively promote a "public opinion" which would diminish the time-lag for ideological reflection:

It is a general rule that you cannot solve the problem of ownership and go on to expand development of the productive forces until you have first prepared public opinion for the seizure of political power. 163

Elsewhere, he asserted that "anyone wanting to overthrow a political regime must create public opinion and do some preparatory ideological work".¹⁶⁴ Thus, because knowledge of material movements was reflected unevenly amongst a class or population, it behoved those whose ideology faithfully reflected such material movements to propagate that ideology to create a public opinion and so shorten the time-lag for ideological reflection amongst the other members of the class or population. Needless to say, there was no feasibility of creating a public opinion for change in the absence of the necessary prerequisite material conditions.

The time-lag between material developments and their reflection in ideology or knowledge was also, for Mao, an important factor in the inertia of bureaucracy and other ideological structures in responding to changes in the socio-economic environment. It is clear that, following the success of the cooperativization movement in 1955, Mao was annoyed by the lethargy of bureaucracy in responding

163. COSE, p. 66; Miscellany II, p. 269; Wansui (1967), p. 195; Wansui (1969), p. 347.

164. MTTU, p. 195; Wansui (1969), pp. 435-6.

to this important development, and he was moved to point out that "people's thinking must adapt itself to the changed conditions".¹⁶⁵ Mao regarded the inertia of bureaucracy resulting from this time-lag in ideological reflection as one of the potentially most serious impediments to the development of the productive forces under socialism, and it is evident that he regarded this feature of super-structural function as performing an important negative role in the sequence of historical causation. While the active creation and promotion of a public opinion could facilitate the adaptation of knowledge to changes in the environment, and shorten the time-lag in the process of "reflection", it was improbable that it could ever be completely eliminated. It would remain, therefore, whatever form society might take in the future, as a constant source of inhibition to the automatic translation of developments within the forces of production throughout the rest of society. As such, it constituted an important element or aspect of the imbalance which characterized social function, and which militated against the possibility of an even rate of economic or social development.

From Mao's insistence on the importance of creating a public opinion for change, it is clear that he did not as a consequence perceive the superstructure *in toto* as a conservative agency. Public opinion itself was identified by Mao as an aspect of the superstructure,¹⁶⁶ but it follows from our reconstruction of his views on the uneven time-lag necessary for the reflection of material movements in ideology and knowledge across a class or population, that he would have conceded that public opinion itself was differentiated; in opposition to a

165. SUICC, pp. 8-9; SW V, p. 240; XJ V, p. 224.

166. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 319.

public opinion become anachronistic in light of material movements in the relations and forces of production, it was necessary to juxtapose and propagate an alternate public opinion appropriate to those material movements, and facilitating their further development. In his Reading Notes, Mao recalled that Marxist-Leninist propaganda had played a vital role in creating a "new public opinion" in favour of revolution in China,¹⁶⁷ and implicit in this recollection is the suggestion that in the absence of the creation and propagation of such a public opinion, the impetus for change generated by developments in the forces and relations of production might have been retarded in actualization. The creation of such a public opinion fell to those individuals whose thinking had become cognizant of developments in material movements; that is, in those individuals in whom ideology or knowledge at a conceptual level faithfully reflected those material movements, and had become systematized to the extent that a common identification of purpose became possible amongst a significant section of a class or population. The political manifestations that this identification of purpose could adopt might vary; an obvious form would be that of organization, and especially political parties which functioned as a focal point for recruitment and the propagation of ideology.

The fact that the superstructure was not *in toto* a conservative sector of society, but constituted an arena in which elements for change in the superstructure (such as political parties of an emergent or oppressed class, a "new public opinion", and so on) contended with superstructural elements which, actively or through the inertia of ideological time-lag, were conservative in their reinforcement of

167. COSE, p. 51; Miscellany II, p. 259; Wansui (1967), p. 182; Wansui (1969), p. 334.

aspects of the relations of production inhibiting the further development of the forces of production, indicates that Mao regarded the superstructure itself as a differentiated social category. That is, the pressure for change emerging initially from the forces of production and having repercussions within the relations of production, produced its own "superstructure"; the imbalance created by the uneven rate of development of the forces and relations of production thus manifested itself in the realm of the superstructure as a contradiction between contending "superstructures". Before there could be a satisfactory resolution of contradictions in the relations of production, the contradiction existing between these contending "superstructures" had to find resolution in favour of the "superstructure" of change. It is at this point that the reason for the importance attributed by Mao to the function of the superstructure becomes evident; for the conservative elements of the superstructure could, through inertia or active resistance, represent an historical log-jam preventing the full realization of pressures for change, and hence inhibiting the forward momentum of societal development. Through the capacity of such conservative superstructural elements to resist pressures for change generated elsewhere in society, the historical role of the superstructure assumed increased negative importance; however, precisely because the superstructure also encompassed elements for change, it constituted the arena in which this historical log-jam would be removed, thus allowing the subsequent resolution of contradictions in the relations of production which had been impeding development of the forces of production. In his Reading Notes, Mao referred to the "positive and negative effects of the superstructure on the production relations",¹⁶⁸ and it was through

168. COSE, p. 82; Miscellany II, p. 280; Wansui (1967), p. 208; Wansui (1969), p. 360.

the resolution of the contradiction between these "positive and negative effects" that the inhibiting influence of the superstructure on the relations of production could be overcome. It is in this schematic sense that developments within the superstructure could be regarded as "principal and decisive"; however, the assumption of a "principal and decisive" role by the superstructure at a certain stage in the cycle of societal development was not, for Mao, the same as its identification as the principal locus of causation providing the generative capacity impelling society forward, and Mao did not so identify the function of the superstructure. Rather, developments within the superstructure could, by impeding and then facilitating progress, represent a major feature in the cycle of historical causation, but intermediate only in its causative significance.

Moreover, although (as is clear from Mao's views on the time-lag for ideological reflection) the capacity of the conservative elements of the superstructure to resist pressure for change was temporally indeterminate, it was not, as we shall see when we turn our attention to Mao's views on historical time, indefinite. The capacity for obstruction by the superstructure was limited by the general tendency of society to advance,¹⁶⁹ and such obstruction would merely serve to intensify the pressure for change over time until such pressure became irresistible.

Once a resolution of the contention between the "positive and negative" aspects of the superstructure had been achieved, the impediment to changes within the relations of production was removed. Consequently, the growing pressures for change could be actualized

169. See especially SW V, p. 333; XJ V, p. 314; "Society is always advancing, for to advance, to develop, is the general trend".

and brought into being, and large-scale transformations could take place within productive relations. What is important to note here is that changes in the relations of production prior to the resolution in the realm of the superstructure were necessarily limited, such limitation being imposed by the maintenance by the superstructure of conservative and dominant structures or functions within the relations of production. Thus, only with the defeat of those conservative dominant elements of the superstructure could a large-scale transformation be realized in the relations of production.

Similarly, the transformation of the relations of production (subsequent to changes in the superstructure) in line with the pressure for change initiated by developments within the forces of production, removed (if temporarily) the imbalance existing between those two sectors, and consequently removed the obstructions impeding the rapid development of the forces of production; the consequence of the removal of this obstruction was a rapid and large-scale advance in the capacity of the forces of production, or in other words, a "leap forward". Here again, the scale of this "leap forward" indicates that the initial changes within the forces of production which initiated the entire historical cycle through which society passed were of themselves comparatively diminutive, but yet were sufficient to establish the imbalance which would set in motion the sequence of events described above. However, the harmonization of this imbalance between forces and relations of production permitting this "leap forward" was, according to Mao, a merely temporary phenomenon; "the contradictions between the productive forces and the production relations unfold without interruption",¹⁷⁰ for their

170. COSE, p. 54; Miscellany II, p. 261; Wansui (1967), p. 185; Wansui (1969), pp. 336-7.

relationship was governed by the propensity of all phenomena to move to a state of disequilibrium, this being a "general, objective rule".¹⁷¹ In this specific case, the state of imbalance or disequilibrium between the relations and forces of production was again established by the limitless potential for development within the forces of production, this potential for development eventually outstripping the changes in the relations of production to the extent that the relations of production thus established once again ultimately came to represent an impediment to the further development of the forces of production. As a result, the entire sequence would commence again.

It is important to note, firstly, that Mao did not regard the resolution of a contradiction within a given sector of the "social system" as signifying the necessarily complete elimination of the elements impeding change. Rather, it would appear that a resolution of such a contradiction signified the removal of the ability of such elements to impede that change, rather than their complete destruction. Thus, while the resolution of a contradiction indicated a shift in the balance between the contending elements thus permitting the actualization of change, the formerly dominant and conservative elements might continue to exist within the "social system" as remnants or residues. Not only could remnants of formerly dominant structures continue to exist, they could continue to exert an influence within the "social system" which, depending on the degree of resolution of past contradictions, might come to constitute once again a significant factor in impeding or retarding the forward momentum of society. It is clear from Mao's writings of the late 1950s that he regarded the

171. MP, p. 66; Wansui (suppt.), p. 33.

revolution which had brought him to power as an incomplete resolution of previous social contradictions. While the balance of power had shifted dramatically towards social elements for change, the persistence of formerly dominant elements within the social fabric and the negative influence they exerted, indicated to Mao that such elements could again come to constitute (in one form or another) significant impediments to further change. Society might, therefore, need to pursue several "revolutions" of its circular pattern of development before the contradiction of which such remnants were an aspect were fully resolved.¹⁷²

Secondly, and following on from this point, this schematic representation of Mao's view of the historical cycle through which society advanced does not specify at any stage the intensity of imbalance created by developments within the forces of production, or the consequent scale of changes at work within the rest of society. In fact, it leaves as an open question the "diameter" of the cycle performed by society in its progress through time. This reticence stems from the fact that Mao, while perceiving this cycle in his observation of social activity and through his reading of history, was not prepared to limit its application to only those historical contexts which might be described as "classic revolutionary". While

172. On the existence of previously dominant social structures continuing within society, see MTTU, p. 226; Miscellany II, p. 393; Wansui (1969), p. 558; and on the persistence of "bourgeois ideology" in socialist society, see SW V, pp. 409-10; XJ V, p. 390; also Wansui (1969), p. 424; on the remnants of classes seeking a comeback, see MTTU, pp. 168, 189; Wansui (1969), pp. 407, 431; see also NCNA 1717 (31 December) 1956, suppt. 250, p. 9, where it asserts "Consolidation of a new system and the dying away of the old influences do not operate in a straight forward fashion but often assume the form of an undulating movement at turning points in history".

he did so utilize it, he also employed it as the model which he perceived as describing the course society might follow in a context not pursuing the contours of a "classic revolutionary" syndrome. The context most obviously to the fore in Mao's mind during this period was that of contemporary and future China, which would continue, he believed, to pursue this cyclical sequence of historical development. Thus, while China's historical route might not again pass through a cycle of change to compare in size and intensity with that of its previous revolutions of the twentieth century, it nevertheless would continue to pursue a like sequence of events within a more restricted cycle. Mao was to make this quite clear in his address to the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee in November 1956:

Will there still be revolutions in the future when all the imperialists in the world are overthrown and classes eliminated? What do you say? In my view, there will still be the need for revolution. The social system will still need to be changed and the term "revolution" will still be in use. Of course revolutions then will not be of the same nature as those in the era of class struggle. But there will still be contradictions between the relations of production and the productive forces, between the superstructure and the economic base. When the relations of production become unsuitable, they will have to be overthrown.¹⁷³

Much the same point was also made by Mao in his Reading Notes; "Under socialism there may be no war but there is still struggle, struggle among sections of the people; there may be no revolution of one class overthrowing another, but there is still revolution".¹⁷⁴ It is important to note here that Mao asserts the relations of production might have to be overthrown even after the elimination of classes,

173. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, pp. 318-9.

174. COSE, p. 71; Miscellany II, pp. 272-3; Wansui (1967), p. 199; Wansui (1969), pp. 350-1.

although in such a situation the "revolution" through which society would pass would be of a more restricted order than those characterizing class society. This restricted cycle might emanate from advances in the technological capacity of the forces of production creating an imbalance with the relations of production,¹⁷⁵ this imbalance making itself manifest in the relations of production as (for example) a contradiction in administration of economic enterprise, faulty prioritization of the ratio between material and non-material incentives, mistakes in the implementation of economic planning for industrial or agricultural enterprises, and so on.¹⁷⁶ The pressures for change thus created could only be fully realized with a concomitant change in those elements of the superstructure impeding that realization. Such elements could include ideological factors such as the attitude to change on the part of the bureaucracy or sections of the leadership,¹⁷⁷ failure of planning to keep abreast of developments within the economy,¹⁷⁸ or structurally, the incompatibility of government departments or agencies to changed conditions and the propensity of their rules and regulations to become outmoded and to function as an

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175. Mao, in fact, spoke of "technological revolution" as being one of the types of revolution society would undergo in the future; see Ibid.
176. "Do not think", Mao commented in the Reading Notes, "that under socialism creative cooperation between the workers and the leadership will emerge all by itself without the need to work at it"; COSE, p. 86; Miscellany II, p. 283; Wansui (1967), p. 212; Wansui (1969), p. 364.
177. "In the course of socialist development each and every period is bound to have a group that is more willing to preserve backward production relations and social institutions"; COSE, pp. 70-72; Miscellany II, pp. 272-3; Wansui (1967), pp. 198-9; Wansui (1969), pp. 350-1.
178. For Mao's comments on planning as an ideological form, and the limited capacity of planning to maintain "balance", see COSE, p. 76; Miscellany II, p. 276; Wansui (1967), pp. 203-4; Wansui (1969), p. 355.

impediment to change.¹⁷⁹ Only with a change in such inhibiting factors as these in the superstructure could the contradiction in the relations of production be satisfactorily resolved; and, only with the resolution of the contradiction in the relations of production could the full potential of initial advances and developments within the forces of production be exploited to the full.

This model does not, therefore, require class struggle as a necessary or prerequisite feature in the circular route described by society. Consequently, such a model would be applicable to the analysis and explanation of a society (possibly a contemporary socialist society or a future communist society) whose development was not characterized by class struggle, and it is probable that Mao regarded this model as capable of describing the function of a society in which class struggle had ceased to be the dominant contradiction within the relations of production. However, while such a model did not necessarily incorporate class struggle, neither did it exclude it. It is clear that, in the early 1960s, Mao interpreted the prevailing conditions in China such that it appeared to him that class struggle might remain a possible feature of the contradiction within the relations of production for some time to come.¹⁸⁰ Consequently, his model for the analysis of historical causation and social activity had to permit of the possibility of class struggle, while not insisting that it be an absolutely necessary integer in its operation.

It is also probable that this conception of the cyclical

179. See MP, p. 66; Wansui (Suppt.), p. 33.

180. See especially Mao's 7,000 cadres speech (January 1962) in MTU, pp. 158-187; Wansui (1969), pp. 399-423; also his speech at the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee (September 1962) in CLG I:4 (Winter, 1968-69), pp. 85-93; Wansui (1969), pp. 430-436.

sequence performed by society (with or without class struggle as an integral feature) informed Mao's concept of "permanent revolution" (*buduan geming*). For while the extent of the "diameter" of the cycle performed by society in its onward advance might be less extensive than that in a "classic revolutionary" context, the changes produced (involving society defining an entire geometrical "revolution") were nevertheless qualitative, and amounted, in Mao's perception, to a revolution in terms of social structure and function. Moreover, the fact of the limitless potential for development inherent in the forces of production meant that society would continue to pursue that sequence without ceasing; that is, it was a "permanent" characteristic of social function.¹⁸¹

It was, in fact, typical of Mao's analytical style that, once he had extracted a model for the interpretation and explanation of social function and historical causation through what he believed to be a valid inductive approach, he then utilized that model as a framework for analysis devoid of the content which had allowed that model to be constructed. During the Yan'an period and subsequently, Mao had utilized certain analytical axioms (most notably those dealing with the pervasiveness of class and class struggle in social function) and, accepting implicitly that such axioms had been constructed in accordance with his own rather idiosyncratic interpretation of inductionism, had then proceeded to apply those axioms to disclose the concrete manifestations that such analytical axioms might adopt in a

181. The *locus classicus* of Mao's references to "permanent revolution" is at MP, pp. 62-4; Wansui (Suppt.), p. 32; for an analysis of Mao's views on this subject, see Stuart Schram, "Mao Tse-tung and the Theory of Permanent Revolution, 1958-1969", *China Quarterly* 46 (1971), pp. 221-244. For other references by Mao to this subject, see MTTU, pp. 94, 117; Miscellany I, p. 100; Wansui (1969), pp. 175, 198.

particular historical context. It appears that the same is true of his general approach to the causal sequence described by society in its progression through time; if society had demonstrated on sufficient instances its propensity to pursue a certain causal sequence, then it was valid to assume that the description of that causal chain of events was a sociological axiom which, by further application, might aid in disclosing the concrete manner in which a given society at a particular moment in history might manifest that cycle. This becomes evident if we turn our attention to examples of the manner in which Mao applied this model of historical sequence and causation. In his Reading Notes, Mao utilized the Industrial Revolution in Europe to make the point that a "leap forward" in the development of the forces of production could only come after changes in the relations of production and the superstructure; in so doing he describes exactly the sequence of causation outlined above. Because of its theoretical importance, this lengthy passage is here reproduced in full:

Similarly, from the standpoint of world history, the bourgeois revolutions and the establishment of the bourgeois nations came before, not after, the Industrial Revolution. The bourgeoisie first changed the superstructure and took possession of the machinery of the state before carrying on propaganda to gather real strength. Only then did they push forward great changes in the production relations. When the production relations had been taken care of and they were on the right track they then opened the way for the development of the productive forces. To be sure, the revolution in the production relations is brought on (*suo yinqi de*) by a certain degree of development of the productive forces, but the major development of the productive forces always comes after changes in the production relations. Consider the history of the development of capitalism. First came simple coordination, which subsequently developed into workshop handicrafts.

At this time capitalist production relations were already taking shape, but the workshops produced without machines. This type of capitalist production relations gave rise to the need for technological advance, creating the conditions for the use of machinery. In England the Industrial Revolution (late eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries) was carried through only after the bourgeois revolution, that is, after the seventeenth century. Although adopting different forms (*jingguo butong de xingshi*), Germany, France, America and Japan all underwent change in the superstructure and production relations before the vast development of capitalist industry. 182

From Mao's point of view, it was important to establish that a "leap forward" in the forces of production came only after fundamental changes in the relations of production and the superstructure, and that only small-scale changes within the forces of production were sufficient to trigger this process. In our brief analysis of Mao's views on the forces of production, it was suggested that one reason for his decision to situate the forces of production outside the "social system" was his sensitivity to the fact that China was possessed of an extremely underdeveloped economy; the successful prosecution of a socialist revolution within a society having such a backward "material base" had indicated to Mao historically that large-scale transformations in this "material base" proceeded rather than preceded changes elsewhere in society. Nevertheless, Mao came to believe (in the early 1950s, with the redaction of his Yan'an writings) that China had been developing "sprouts of capitalism" within its feudal society, and that (even without Western intervention) these "sprouts" (*mengya*) would have of themselves been sufficient to bring on the revolutionary changes within the "social system". 183

182. COSE, p. 66; Miscellany II, p. 269; Wansui (1967), pp. 194-5; Wansui (1969), pp. 346-7. Emphasis added.

183. See SW II, p. 309; for Stuart Schram's analysis, see PTMTT, p. 114; Mao also refers to such "sprouts" at MTTU, p. 174; Wansui (1969), p. 412.

The revolutionary changes initiated by these "sprouts" would in turn create a "social system" which would facilitate the rapid development of the forces of production. His interpretation of the Industrial Revolution (in Europe, as well as in America and Japan) indicates that this was an important feature of his analytical framework, its importance possibly stemming from his own historical experience, and his expectation that the achievement of changes in the "social system" in China would bring about the "leap forward" in the forces of production which he so ardently desired. In his Reading Notes, Mao was to take issue with the Soviet Manual which claimed that, because of China's backwardness, "special conditions" had been necessary for her revolution; Mao countered this "error" by pointing out that in its own revolution, the Soviet Union "also resolved the question of ownership first and then carried out industrialization".¹⁸⁴ In other words, although the specific manifestation may have been different in the Russian case, the general rule followed that large-scale development of the forces of production could only come after changes in the relations of production and the superstructure.

It is here that the difference between Mao's and Stalin's position on causation becomes evident. We have had cause to note that Mao's exclusion of the forces of production from the 'social system' had been anticipated by Stalin. However, Mao's views on causation differ from Stalin's on several counts. Firstly, Mao (as we have seen) argued that the 'human factor' was the most important factor within the forces of production; Stalin, on the contrary, argued for the centrality of the implements of production and machinery.¹⁸⁵ Secondly, while Stalin suggested

184. COSE, pp. 65-6; Miscellany II, p. 269; Wansui (1967), p. 194; Wansui (1969), p. 346.

185. Economic Problems..., pp. 55-6; Marxism and..., pp. 6-7.

that development of the forces of production was a key factor in the unfolding of the historical process,¹⁸⁶ he did not concede as Mao had that such development need only be diminutive to allow large-scale changes in the 'social system'. Rather, the impression gained from Stalin's writings is that the development of the forces of production had to be of a substantial order before such large-scale changes could be created within the rest of society. Stalin's emphasis on the mechanical aspects of production at the expense of the 'human factor' thus led to an insistence on the need for major development of the forces of production as the precursor to social and historical development, whereas Mao's emphasis on the 'human factor' permitted that human consciousness of the diminutive developments within the forces of production could allow such developments to be translated into large-scale transformations within the 'social system'.

When Mao turned his attention to the specific case of the Chinese revolution, the sequence of events is again that outlined above, and again there is a heavy emphasis on the fact that large-scale transformations in the forces of production could only have been subsequent to changes elsewhere in the 'social system':

It is not enough to assert that the development of large industry is the foundation for the socialist transformation of the economy. All revolutionary history shows that the full development of the productive forces is not

186. Economic Problems..., p. 52.

the prerequisite for the transformation of backward production relations. Our revolution began with Marxist-Leninist propaganda, which served to create new public opinion in favour of revolution. After the old production relations had been destroyed new ones were created, and these cleared the way for the development of new social productive forces. With that behind us we were able to set in motion the technological revolution to develop social productive forces on a large scale.¹⁸⁷

One of the most consistent features of Mao's application of this model was, in fact, the interdependence which he ascribed to the functioning of the constituent elements of society; for the contradictions manifested in any one sector were related to those in others, and the major contradictions (those which impelled society forward) were a function of the imbalance created by developments within the forces of production. In part at least, therefore, resolution of such contradictions within any sector depended on concomitant changes in other areas of society.

As a purportedly materialist explanation of history, however, the assertion of such interdependence still raises questions regarding the degree of effectivity in historical causation exercised by any one sector. Although it is clear that Mao still looked to changes within the forces of production (however limited in extent) as the precursor initiating the sequence of causation described by society, the amplification of the influence of those changes was a function of the relations of production and the superstructure. Indeed, it appears that in some ways Mao regarded the superstructure as the ultimate arena within which contradictions, arising from the imbalance

187. COSE, p. 51; Miscellany II, p. 259; Wansui (1967), p. 182; Wansui (1969), p. 334. Emphasis added.

established by developments within the forces of production, would finally be resolved. As a result, developments within the superstructure assume in this model a significant degree of effectivity (though not primacy) in this causal sequence.

In terms of Marxist orthodoxy, however, Mao's concentration on the realm of the superstructure as the arena accommodating both obstruction to change and its subsequent facilitation, need not excite excessive curiosity. For it is possible to demonstrate [see Chapter I] that in Marx's own view of the sequence of historical causation, it is in the realm of the superstructure that the immediate and actual revolutionary conflagration takes place (although its locus of causation may reside elsewhere). Mao's emphasis on the developments within the superstructure hardly therefore appears as heterodox as is sometimes imagined.

It is, rather, this insistence of Mao's that the large-scale transformation of the forces of production is a consequence of changes in the relations of production and the superstructure, and that only very diminutive developments are necessary within the forces of production to trigger those changes, that places in question the orthodoxy of his view of historical causation. For if such was the case (and Mao believed that history had indicated the correctness of his position), then the possibility of rapid economic development and industrialization ceased to be a prerogative of those societies already possessing a well-developed economic and technological foundation and infrastructure, and became a strong historical possibility also for those underdeveloped societies of the world possessing only the "sprouts" of the future economic order.

With only incipient developments within the forces of production, the "social system" astride a backward "material base" could undergo radical transformation which would then create the conditions to foster and develop those emergent "sprouts". While such incipient developments were necessary and were antecedent temporally and causally in the chain of historical causation, the significance of such diminutive developments was amplified within the "social system" itself, and it was on the outcome of those changes within the "social system" that the future large-scale expansion of the forces of production depended. While Mao would probably have rejected the notion that his schema necessarily relocated the locus of revolution from the advanced to underdeveloped countries, he would certainly have argued that it drastically extended that locus to incorporate those countries whose "material bases" contained only limited elements for change. Thus, while Mao perceived the same sequence of historical causation at work in the histories of both advanced and backward nations, his schema was obviously one which was given strong reinforcement by the Chinese experience, and which represented a perception of historical development positive in its prognosis for major change and revolution in those countries of the third world possessed of a backward "material base".

At this point, it is useful to make reference to the experience of the Great Leap Forward, and to inquire whether Mao's motivation for initiating this dramatic episode in China's political history can find adequate explanation by reference to the model of historical causation which we have extricated from Mao's writings. The Great Leap Forward has frequently been perceived by Western analysts as an example of Mao's disregard for the constraints of the objective situation and his excessive reliance on the human factor and the human will as agents

for bringing about rapid economic development. For example, Stuart Schram, writing from the perspective of the Cultural Revolution, argued that

If, throughout most of his career, Mao's ideas were on the whole well attuned to China's needs, the drama of the years since 1958 has been the increasingly flagrant divorce between the belief in human omnipotence born of his guerilla experience and the objective difficulties of economic development. Mao's belief that political zeal can advantageously replace technological competence has involved him in a conflict not only with reality, but with a majority of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. 188

John Starr also sees in the policies of the Great Leap Forward evidence of a 'utopianism' in some contrast with Mao's 'otherwise pragmatic political philosophy', but argues that Mao abandoned this "dalliance with utopianism almost as soon as he entered it".¹⁸⁹

While it is beyond the scope of this study to attempt an in-depth investigation of the Great Leap Forward or its applicability to the Chinese context of the late 1950s, it is valid to inquire if there was a logical fit between Mao's views on historical causation (which of course encompassed his views on the human will, ideology and the superstructure) and his call for a Great Leap Forward in 1958; or whether the Great Leap Forward is best perceived (as Starr implies) as a short-lived aberration in Mao's intellectual and political career.

One of the most important characteristics of Mao's position on historical causation was his insistence on the interrelated nature of the various elements of society; developments within any one area of society being contingent upon developments in other areas of society. So, for example, changes in practices or structures within the relations of production (brought on by a certain degree of development of the forces

188. Stuart Schram, "Mao Tse-tung as Charismatic Leader", Asian Survey VII:6 (June 1967), p.386.

189. Starr, "Maoism and Marxist Utopianism", *Op.cit.*, pp.56, 58-9.

of production) could not be fully realized or made dominant without a transformation of those aspects of the superstructure which served to inhibit that realization. Pressures for change within the relations of production created a 'superstructure' for change which were in contention with those elements of the superstructure which inhibited the pressures for change within the relations of production. Moreover, the social mechanism which permitted the concatenation of the various elements or areas of society was the human factor itself. Imbalances and contradictions perceived in one area of society were translated and conveyed into other areas by man who pursued different roles in different social contexts. Mao perceived man as the 'foremost factor' within the forces of production, and indicated that the influence of developments within this sector was transmitted and amplified throughout the 'social system' by man functioning as class member or enterprise operative within the relations of production, and in his political capacities and as the bearer of ideology within the superstructure. The fact of differentiation within those elements of society (forces for both change and conservatism) indicates that the 'human factor' itself was necessarily differentiated into different men, some of whom advocated changes due to a perception of imbalance and contradiction, and some who resisted such changes by virtue of the limitations imposed by class outlook and the possible 'time-lag' involved in correct reflection of material changes as conceptual knowledge or ideology. Consequently, the stress on the 'human factor' during the late 1950s did not impute any complete unanimity of perceptions or political attitudes to men in general.¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Mao's optimism in the 'human factor' (as qualified above) was linked to his belief

190. For Mao's references to variability amongst human beings, see SW V, p.440; XJ V, p.423; also Miscellany I, pp. 80, 113, 142; Wansui (1969), pp. 149, 213, 261.

that a rapid development of the forces of production could only occur subsequent to changes within the 'social system' itself; that is, in the relations of production and within the 'social relations of another kind', the superstructure. Such developments in the forces of production were thus attendant upon changes in the way in which production and superstructural relations between men were organized. And while these changes had to be initiated by a degree of development within the forces of production, such changes in production and superstructural relationships were not dependent upon large-scale technological transformations within the productive forces. A great leap forward of the forces of production was thus contingent upon changes within the 'social system', on a radical transformation in the relationships between men in their productive and superstructural roles, and not on an assertion of the primacy of technology or on the necessity of establishing as a first step a well-developed technological basis and infrastructure. It was, Mao believed, changes within the 'human factor' at the level of the relations of production and the superstructure which preceded and were responsible for large-scale development of the forces of production.

There is clear evidence in the texts to suggest that Mao held this position not only during the Great Leap Forward, but before and after it. In a commentary to Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside (1955), Mao was to presage the establishment of the people's communes by insisting that the elementary cooperatives as a form of ownership would eventually restrict the forces of production and thus require changes to permit their further development; "once the productive forces are further freed, production will expand even more".¹⁹¹ Changes in ownership (that is, in production relations) are here indicated as an important stimulus to the

191. SW V, p. 275; XJ V, p. 259; SUICC, p. 477.

expansion of the forces of production. Similarly, in his Reading Notes of the early 1960s, Mao was to reject the notion that technology alone could solve the problem of production; this was dependent rather on raising the consciousness of those involved in production:

Again and again the text emphasizes how important machinery is for the transformation. But if the consciousness of the peasantry is not raised, if ideology is not transformed, and you are depending on nothing but machinery---what good will it be ? 192

In this passage, superstructural factors (consciousness, ideology) are deemed crucial for creating the conditions for a rapid increase in economic production.

The major policies of the Great Leap Forward evidently mirror Mao's conviction that a 'leap forward' in China's productive forces was dependent on substantial changes in both the superstructural and production relations of her 'social system'. Mao believed that China's capacity to modernize and industrialize was being seriously impeded by aspects of both the superstructure and relations of production which no longer corresponded to the requirements of production. This was, Mao sensed, particularly the case with ideology and consciousness. There was, both within and without the Party, a tendency for consciousness and ideology to lag behind developments which had and were occurring within the Chinese economy. In his talks at Chengdu in March 1958, Mao drew particular attention to the problem of 'dogmatism' within the Party. This was manifested in particular as an excessively cautious attitude in policy formulation and an attachment to a range of policy experiences which Mao felt were unsuited to the particular requirements of the contemporary

192. COSE, p. 55; Miscellany II, p. 262; Wansui (1967), p. 185; Wansui (1969), p. 337.

Chinese context.¹⁹³ This tendency of the thinking of Party members to lag behind or be ill-attuned to developments within society and the economy could however be shortened through campaigns within the superstructure to expose excessive conservatism and the disparity between thought and reality. And Mao believed that such rectification campaigns would have the effect of increasing production through this 'liberation' of the thinking of Party members.¹⁹⁴ Within the Chinese population generally, the persistence of old ideas, attitudes and habits also served to inhibit the development of China's productive capacity, and a primary purpose of a mass campaign such as the Great Leap Forward was the weakening of the influence of such anachronistic ideology and the strengthening of modes of thought which were deemed to be consistent with the 'realities' and needs of China's economic development. The superstructure therefore contained negative or retrograde elements which Mao clearly felt were impeding the realization of the goals of modernization and rapid economic growth. A successful struggle within the realm of the superstructure to eliminate or seriously weaken the influence of such negative elements would thus (from Mao's perspective) have the effect of loosening the restraints which these negative elements imposed on economic development and thus, in combination with changes within the relations of production, contribute to a 'leap forward' in the Chinese economy.

As well as achieving an increase in production through changes in the superstructure, the Great Leap Forward was premised on the potential which a transformation of the relations of production offered. As we have seen, Mao perceived the relations of production as constituted of three elements; the ownership system, mutual relations, and the

193. MTU, pp. 97-103, 127.

194. MTU, p. 126.

distribution system. The policies of the Great Leap Forward suggest that Mao was concerned to bring about changes in each of these elements of the relations of production. The move to establish people's communes in place of the higher-level cooperatives was predicated on the assumption that negative aspects of the ownership system such as the persistence of private ownership inhibited the full development of the forces of production. With the weakening of these negative elements within the ownership system, and the establishment of more socialist forms of ownership, production could be expected to expand. Mao was to make clear this link between the establishment of the communes and increased production in November 1958:

In addition to the rectification movement and the breakdown of the legal power and ideology of the bourgeoisie, China has the people's communes, which makes it easier to attain greater, faster, better and more economical results. 195

However, Mao also believed that the Great Leap Forward could be achieved through a transformation of the mutual relations within the relations of production. At the Hangzhou Conference of April 1958, Mao emphasized that an important goal of the current mass campaign was a change in mutual relations:

The ownership system, mutual relations, and distribution relations are the three issues in production relations. When we tackle the middle, it is to tackle the mutual relations. Our rectification is to solve the mutual relations issue... Let us rectify the mutual relations, the relations between the party and political work groups and the workers in the plant, between the cadres and members in the cooperative, between the party and political personnel of all levels and the lower echelons, between the cadres and the masses, and between the principal and teacher and the students. 196

195. Miscellany I, p. 132; Wansui (1969), p.251.

196. Miscellany I, p. 87; Wansui (1969), p. 183.

Similarly, in terms of the distribution relations, the Great Leap Forward witnessed an emphasis on moral incentives and a move to introduce forms of distribution such as the communal mess halls and the free supply system deemed more compatible with socialism.

Mao thus perceived a fundamental transformation of the superstructure and the relations of production as creating the foundations for a rapid and large-scale development of China's productive forces. However, while this view does not stand in any apparent contradiction with Mao's position on historical causation generally, it appears in retrospect that his attempt to bring about such a transformation within the 'social system' is so short a space of time does betoken a less than pragmatic realization of the difficulties involved in such an undertaking. The haste and poor preparation with which many of the policies of the Great Leap Forward were implemented was to lead in the event, not to a 'leap forward' in the economy, but a serious drop---15% according to one Western economist---in China's domestic product.¹⁹⁷ As we have seen, Mao was, at the Lushan Plenum and in his Reading Notes, to subsequently concede the negative economic consequences of the Great Leap Forward. However, his remarks suggest that he did not believe the policies of the Great Leap Forward as such to be responsible for such untoward consequences, but the haste with which they were implemented. Mao did not lose confidence in the concept of the communes and continued to describe the communes as the 'basic structure' for the period of the socialist transition. Similarly, his comments in the early 1960s on the problem of the mutual relations indicate if anything an intensification of his views on the need to rectify the problems in this area. Moreover, the failure of the Great Leap Forward in economic terms

197. Ta-Chung Liu, "Economic Developments of the Chinese Mainland, 1949-1965", in Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou (eds.), China in Crisis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968) I, Book II, pp. 647-8.

served to harden his suspicion that the superstructure was one important area of society which was impeding China's economic development. Consequently, Mao remained an advocate of the need for superstructural changes within Chinese society, and in particular of the importance of ideological remoulding to weaken the influence of negative and outdated ideas and attitudes; and he continued to believe that such superstructural changes would eventually lead to increased economic productivity.

It would thus seem evident that while the failure of the Great Leap Forward to produce the dramatic economic results which Mao expected may have increased his sensitivity to the time-span needed for society to pass through an entire cycle or 'revolution', it did not lead him to abandon the fundamental elements of his theoretical position on historical causation. These remained throughout the early 1960s and continued to inform his approach to the formulation of policies for the socialist transition.

While Mao's belief that only very diminutive developments within the forces of production were required to trigger large-scale changes within the 'social system' may have been somewhat unorthodox, so too was his refusal to limit temporally the application of his views on historical causation to only the past and present. By attributing the forces of production with a limitless potential for development, Mao was indicating a mechanism which would perpetually create and recreate the imbalance between the major sectors of society which produced those major contradictions in the social fabric which

generate the forward momentum of society. Because Mao could perceive no limit to the potential of the forces of production, he could not envisage any point in time at which the various sectors of society would come to rest in a permanent state of equilibrium or harmony. This point is made abundantly clear in the second editorial of 1956 concerning the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

When the old relations of production no longer basically correspond to the productive forces, the latter having reached a certain stage of development, and when the old superstructure no longer fundamentally corresponds to the economic basis, the latter having reached a certain stage of development, then changes of a fundamental nature must inevitably occur; whoever tries to resist such changes is discarded by history. This law is applicable through different forms to all types of society. That is to say, it also applies to the socialist society of today and the communist society of tomorrow...¹⁹⁸

While the contradictions engendered between the major sectors of society might differ in intensity or type from those in the past, the society of the future would still describe the same sequence of events in its constant pursuit of that transitory equilibrium which would permit of a "leap forward" in its "material base".¹⁹⁹ In the section that follows, a more detailed analysis will be offered of Mao's views on historical time, and on this question of society's odyssey into the future.

198. NCNA 1717 (31 December 1956), Suppt. 250, p. 7. Emphasis added.

199. In opposition to Stalin, Mao believed it was the contradictions between these major sectors of society "which propel socialist society forward". (SW V, pp. 376-7; XJ V, p. 356)

II. Historical Time and the Future

The validity of employing a periodization in the analysis of Mao Zedong's thought rests on the assumption that some allowance needs be made for possible fluctuations and changes over time in the manner in which Mao perceived both society and its historical development, and that a periodization would best serve to highlight any such changes. Nowhere is this assumption given greater validation than in the change of emphasis and conception which emerges from a comparison of Mao's views on historical time during the Yan'an period and the period following cooperativization, 1955-1964. It will be remembered that Mao's conception of historical time during the Yan'an period was strongly characterized by eschatological themes, asserting the imminent realization of an era of perpetual peace and harmony on earth. It was argued that the emergence of such eschatological themes was characteristically (in large part at least) a function of the chaotic and violent conditions which constituted the environment within which Mao's view of history developed. Thus, while Mao's confidence in such imminentization may have found some scientific reinforcement from certain basic predictive elements of Marxism, in character and tenor the view of historical time and the future which did emerge owed as much to the influence of that war-like environment on his thought.

This interpretation is indeed given greater credence by the fact that, while there continued a very strongly defined sense of time and the future in Mao's thought, such eschatological themes

virtually disappeared from his writings after 1955. This substantive change in perception of historical time must be viewed as evidence of the important influence that the contemporary historical environment exercised in the formulation of Mao's thought, and that, while he was obviously strongly influenced by sources of indirect experience (especially the Marxist classics and aspects of the Chinese literary and intellectual heritage), the final product of his thought was necessarily an admixture of his interpretation of such indirect experience coupled with and filtered through his perception of the operation of society at any given point in time. With Liberation in 1949 and the early years of the People's Republic, the environment had altered domestically from a threatening and bloody succession of military struggles (in short, the environment of upheaval and chaos in which eschatology characteristically emerges) to one of consolidation and stabilization in which the urgent and acute desire for peace and tranquility was somewhat assuaged. Consequently, the concept of an imminent era of perpetual peace disappears as a significant aspect of Mao's conception of historical time and the future.

A concomitant of this change in perception of historical time was the necessary relegation of the possible realization of the desired society well into the future. As we shall see, the texts of this period by and large indicate that the attainment of communism was not for Mao a possibility for the immediate future. The important exception to this generalization is to be found in the texts of the Great Leap Forward. In these documents, Mao was for a short time during 1958 to indicate something of a chiliastic anticipation that China might be capable of achieving a rapid transition to communism through a reorganization of her relations of production and consequent rapid economic development. However, as Starr ²⁰⁰ points out, this dalliance with 'utopianism' was short lived and quickly

200. Starr, "Maoism and Marxist Utopianism", Op.cit., pp. 56, 58-9.

abandoned as the negative consequences of the Great Leap Forward were revealed. By and large, however, Mao's position during the 1955-64 period was very different from that of the Yan'an Period in his concession that the realization of communism or an era of perpetual peace was not an imminent possibility.

While the demise of eschatology in Mao's thinking was consonant with this relegation of the attainment of communism well into the future, it was a function also of the fact that the schema employed by him after 1955 for the analysis of social activity incorporated an analytical element which was incompatible with an eschatological bias. By attributing man (as the "foremost factor" of the forces of production) with a limitless potential for development and progress in the war against nature, and by asserting that potential as the seminal locus for the creation of the imbalance motivating the progress of society, Mao was establishing a social mechanism which necessarily denied the possibility that society might ever come to rest in a state of tranquility and harmony, unscathed by contradiction and struggle. In the section that follows, it is proposed to extricate and analyze Mao's views on the manner in which society progressed through time; by so doing, it will be demonstrated that such views were a logical extension (projected temporally into the future) of his conception of the sequence of causation within society, and that the cyclical conception of the causation sequence elucidated above functioned as the premise for his views of the temporal route described by society.

In the causation sequence described in the previous section, developments within the forces of production (however diminutive) were attributed with the capacity for establishing the imbalance necessary to impel society through a sequence of events in the quest to remove that imbalance, and consequently permit the large-scale expansion of the forces of production. Because of the interdependence of the various

sectors of society it was necessary for changes in any one sector to be accompanied by concomitant changes in other constituent sectors of society. Such interdependence and interrelatedness between sectors necessitated that society need progress through a cycle of indeterminate (but not indefinite) duration in order to permit the resolution of those contradictions maintaining the imbalance inhibiting the development of the forces of production. This notion of a cyclical sequence of causation constantly generated and re-generated by the limitless potential of the forces of production would lead one to expect that Mao perceived society's progression through time in terms of a continual and unending series of such cycles. Indeed, when we turn to an examination of his comments on society's progression through time, this is the picture that emerges. In his Shanghai speech entitled Beat Back the attacks of the Bourgeois Rightists (July 1957), Mao asserted that "society invariably moves forward in a spiral (*luoxuanxing*)",²⁰¹ and in January of 1958, he once again argued that "progress is made in a zig-zag spiral pattern".²⁰² Mao frequently likened this form of development to a wave-like form of motion, in which the progress of society was characterized not by an even rate of development, but by undulations or zig-zags in its forward momentum. In his Reading Notes, Mao objected to the assumption of the Soviet Manual that the development of society and its economy under socialism would be made in a steady uni-linear progression unmarred by checks or setbacks:

Technology and the economy both develop in this way. The text seems unacquainted with the wavelike advances of the development of socialist production and speaks of the development of socialist economy as perfectly linear, free of dips.

201. SW V, pp. 462-3; XJ V, p. 446; cf. USW, p. 261; Wansui (1969), p. 114.

202. Miscellany I, p. 80; Wansui (1969), p. 149.

This is unthinkable. No line of development is straight; it is wave (*bolangxing*) or spiral shaped.²⁰³

This objection to the Soviet Manual was predicated on a belief that all societies (be they capitalist, socialist, or for that matter, communist) had, by virtue of a mechanism (the limitless potential of the force of production) inherent within them, the characteristic of performing the same sequence or pattern of development in their progression through time. While the actual manifestation of the pattern might (and probably would) vary from one historical instance to another, the general sequence of events itself would not. To attribute, as the Soviet Manual did, one type of development to a capitalist society and another to a socialist society was, in Mao's view, to ignore the fact that all societies were governed by the same laws of development; the difference between socialist and capitalist societies lay in the manner in which that sequence manifested itself concretely, in the intensity or diameter of the cycle performed, and not in whether or not that sequence of events would be pursued.

Mao's conviction that all societies described a "spiral" or "wave-like" contour in their progression through time, ran parallel to and was reinforced by certain other of his theoretical convictions. Firstly, Mao's theory of motion incorporated the view that all motion (the motion of society included) was characterized by a wave-like form of advance. In April of 1959, Mao was to stress this characteristic of motion in a talk at the Seventh Plenum of the Eight Central Committee:

203. COSE, p. 80; Miscellany II, p. 279; Wansui (1967), p. 207; Wansui (1969), p. 359.

All movements consist of waves; in natural science there are sound waves and electromagnetic waves. That all movements advance in wave-like fashion is a law of the development of motion; it is objective and does not change in response to human will. 204

Similarly, Mao was to stress the wave-like characteristic inherent in motion in his discussion of economic accumulation at a conference of Party secretaries in January 1957:

In other words, accumulation proceeds in a wave-like manner or in spirals. Since everything in the world is itself a contradiction, a unity of opposites, its movement and development is wave-like. The light emitted by the sun is called light waves, the waves transmitted by radio stations are called radio waves, and sound is carried by sound waves. Water moves in water waves and heat in heat waves...Such is the undulatory nature (*qushewing*) of the movement of opposites in all things. 205

That Mao perceived the motion of society as a concrete manifestation of the "wave-like" characteristic of motion generally is evidenced by his numerous references to this quality of societal development. 206 For example, "We should tell the cadres and the masses", he asserted in November of 1956, "that it (the economy) is both advancing and retreating, but mainly advancing, though not in a straight line but in a wave-like manner...Society is always advancing, for to advance, to develop, is the general trend". 207 Moreover, the major upheavals within society, such as the conflict between capitalism and

204. Miscellany I, p. 175; Wansui (1967), p. 51.

205. SW V, p. 382; XJ V, p. 361.

206. See SW V, p. 500; XJ V, p. 482; also MTU, pp. 106-7; Wansui (1969), pp. 167-8; also Miscellany I, pp. 179, 202-3; Wansui (1967), pp. 59, 125; also COSE, p. 87; Miscellany II, p. 284; Wansui (1967), p. 213; Wansui (1969), p. 364; also Miscellany II, p. 244; Wansui (1967), p. 266.

207. SW V, p. 333; XJ V, p. 314.

socialism, followed this "wave-like" pattern; "The struggle between the road of socialism and the road of capitalism runs through this whole historical period. This struggle rises and falls in a wavelike manner, at times becoming very fierce, and the forms of struggle are many and varied".²⁰⁸

A second and related theoretical conviction was Mao's belief that one of the most fundamental laws describing the behaviour of phenomena was that of disequilibrium or imbalance (*bu pingheng*); "disequilibrium is the principle (*faze*) of the development of the universe".²⁰⁹ Mao believed that it was a characteristic inherent in the development of all phenomena to move constantly towards a state of disequilibrium or imbalance; in his Reading Notes, he declared that "the development of all things is characterized by imbalance".²¹⁰ Thus, while the propensity for a state of imbalance to be repeatedly established by the forces of production had been demonstrated to Mao's own satisfaction by his observations of society and history, his views on disequilibrium certainly served to reinforce those observations. In his Sixty Articles on Work Methods (1958), Mao emphasized that disequilibrium, being an intrinsic feature of the development of society, had to be recognized not as a negative factor, but as the characteristic which actually permitted society to advance:

Disequilibrium is a general, objective rule. The cycle, which is endless, evolves from disequilibrium to equilibrium and then to disequilibrium again. Each cycle, however, brings us to a higher level of development. Disequilibrium is normal and absolute whereas

208. MDOCC, p. 263; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 16.

209. Wansui (1969), p. 149; the translation at Miscellany I, p. 80, is not accurate.

210. COSE, p. 80; Miscellany II, p. 279; Wansui (1967), p. 207; Wansui (1969), p. 359.

equilibrium is temporary and relative. The changes into equilibrium or disequilibrium in our national economy consists of the process of an overall quantitative change and many qualitative changes. After a certain number of years, China will complete a leap by transforming herself from an agrarian to an industrial country. Then she will pick up the process of her quantitative changes again. 211

From Mao's comments here, several points need to be made.

Firstly, it will be noticed that he asserts the cycle from disequilibrium to equilibrium and back again, to be "endless" (*xunhuan bu yi, yongyuan ru ci*). The notion of a perpetual repetition of this cycle has important implications for Mao's view of the future; for if such a cycle were "endless" (and obviously society's progression through time was for Mao an example and illustration of such a cycle), it presumes that at no point in time can that cycle ever come to rest, and moreover that time must project infinitely into the future to accommodate that cycle. In fact, Mao asserted on more than one occasion during this period that time was indeed infinite; "the world is infinite; in both time and space, the world is boundless and inexhaustible".²¹² We have already observed that Mao had attributed man as the "foremost factor" within the forces of production with a limitless potential for development, and that this limitless potential was an important social mechanism in the manifestation of the disequilibrium cycle within society. Consequently, it would appear that there was more than an accidental consonance between his theoretical views on disequilibrium and his disinclination to assert a point in

211. MP, p. 66; Wansui (suppt.), p. 33.

212. Miscellany II, p. 397; Wansui (1960), p. 561; see also MTU, p. 110; Wansui (1969), p. 170; also MTU, p. 229; Miscellany II, p. 395; Wansui (1969), p. 560.

time in the future at which society might come to rest in a finished state. Indeed when we come to examine Mao's perception of the future more closely, it will become evident that there was for Mao no end point in time towards which society was progressing, and which necessarily signified the ultimate goal of social activity.

Secondly, one of the characteristics of the disequilibrium cycle was that each cycle attained a higher level of development than the previous cycle. This notion also has implications for Mao's view of historical time, for it signifies that time can never return (as some philosophers of Ancient China and Greece had believed) to the same point or its point of origin; indeed Mao once commented that "...time, once gone, never returns".²¹³ His view of the causation sequence described by society incorporated the assumption that with each cycle traversed by society, it would attain a higher degree of development. It was the "general trend" for society to advance,²¹⁴ and as this advance was made in a series of cycles, the picture of historical time that emerges is one of society describing an ascending spiral in its progression through time. Although the rate of advance could not be constant, the advance itself was inexorable. Here again, there is a marked consonance between the logic inspiring Mao's theory of disequilibrium and his perception of the advance of society through time.

From Mao's references to the characteristic of society to advance through time in a "wave-like" or "spiral" manner, it is

213. Miscellany I, p. 179; Wansui (1967), p. 60.

214. SW V, p. 333; XJ V, p. 314; see also MTU, pp. 93-4; CLG I:4, p. 13; "I consider that human history advances. One generation is not as good as another--people who went before are not as good as those who follow later".

evident that he regarded this concept as an important factor in approaching the formulation of policies for socialist construction. At the Chengdu Conference (March 1958), Mao illustrated the concept of a "wave-like" form of advance with numerous examples of its manifestation, and stressed that policies for economic development had to take account of this factor as it operated within society and the economy:

The aim of the meetings is to coordinate the rhythm of production. While one wave has not yet fallen, another rises in turn; this is the unity of opposites, fast and slow. Under the general line of going all out and aiming high to achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results, a wave-like form of progress is the unity of opposites, deliberation and haste, the unity of opposites, toil and dreams. If we have only haste and toil, that is one-sided. To be concerned only with the intensity of labour--that won't do, will it?

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In the Sixteen Articles Concerning Work Methods (May 1959), Mao returned to the theme that socialist construction followed a wave-like form of advance; "work should proceed in a wave-like motion... In 1961 we will have another great leap forward. Within socialist construction there must be a comprehension of the wave-like form of advance... We cannot have a high tide everyday. I am not against progress in a wave-like motion but I am against adventurism".²¹⁶ Similarly, in his speech at the Ninth Plenum of the Eight Central Committee (January 1961), Mao employed the concept of a wave-like form of advance to argue against attempting to move beyond the possible

215. MTU, pp. 106-7; Wansui (1969), pp. 167-8; This section also appears as one of the Examples of Dialectics (abstract compilation), in Miscellany I, pp. 202-5; Wansui (1967), pp. 124-7.

216. Wansui (1967), p. 59; the translation at Miscellany I, p. 179 has required some alteration.

limits set by the objective situation:

Judging from the present, socialist construction cannot be too fast; we have to stress wavelike advances. Comrade Po-ta has raised the question whether socialism has a periodic law. Just like an army on the march, it must have long and short rests; in between battles it must rest and regroup, must combine hard work and relaxation.

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We have already seen that Mao took strong exception to the Soviet Manual's assumption that economic development under socialism would be "linear" or "free of dips", for it was a feature of the development of all societies to manifest a form of advance that was wave-like or spiral-shaped. It was therefore a mistake to approach economic planning or policy formulation with the expectation that the policy maker could, by careful and complete planning, impose a constant rate of development on society; for even under such planning the inherent tendency for disequilibrium to emerge within society would necessitate a constant readjustment of the original plan and still eventuate in a rate of development that was not linear, but wave-like. Rather, knowledge of the propensity of society to employ a wave-like form of advance assisted planning in that allowance could be made for the emergence and re-emergence of the imbalances which actually impelled society forward; although it was beyond the power of the policy maker to prevent the emergence of such imbalances, planners and planning could, by maintaining a sensitivity to the fact that flexibility was required to allow for the continual emergence of imbalances requiring adjustment of original means and targets, shorten the time-lag required in incorporating fresh imbalances into the plan, and thus facilitate their speedy resolution and hence

contribute to a more rapid progress in the forward momentum of society. In his Reading Notes, Mao made it clear that one of the central features of planning was this allowance for, and resolution of, imbalance as it emerged:

Plans constantly have to be revised because new imbalances recur...The national economy of a socialist society can have planned proportional development which enables imbalances to be regulated. However, imbalance does not go away. "Unevenness is in the nature of things". Because private ownership was eliminated it was possible to have planned organization of the economy. Therefore, it was possible to control and utilize consciously the objective laws of imbalance to create many relative temporary balances...Balance is relative, imbalance absolute. This is a universal law which I am convinced applies to socialist society...The various balances attained in planning are temporary, transitional and conditional, hence relative. Who can imagine a state of equilibrium that is unconditional, eternal.²¹⁸

It is obvious from this passage that Mao did not perceive an economic plan to be a fixed or immutable blue-print, and any plan, to retain utility, had to be constantly revised and updated to incorporate the emergence of fresh imbalances. Thus, while a plan might incorporate general goals, it also had to employ a constant adjustment of means to allow for contingencies represented by imbalances which would certainly emerge within the life of the plan. One of the problems associated with planning was that, as an ideological response to an economic or social reality, it was characterized by a time-lag in its response to emergent imbalances, and this characteristic might itself initially constitute an impediment to the expeditious resolution of those imbalances.²¹⁹ However, once an imbalance had been

218. COSE, pp. 81-2; Miscellany II, pp. 279-80; Wansui (1967), pp. 206-8; Wansui (1969), pp. 358-60.

219. Mao was also well aware of the possibility of "mistakes" in planning, and he believed that this factor would be a problem well into the future; see SW V, p. 333; XJ V, p. 314.

perceived and acted upon, planning could then constitute an important agent in the facilitation of the resolution of that imbalance, and it is clear that Mao did not underestimate the capacity of planning to perform that function. As he was to point out in his Reading Notes, "a plan is an ideological form. Ideology is a reflection of realities, but it also acts upon realities...Thus, ideological forms such as plans have a great effect on economic development and its rate".²²⁰

However, if society describes a spiral or wave-like form of advance in its progression through time, what influence could such ideological forms as planning have on that form of advance? It would appear that Mao regarded the possibilities of planning to be limited by this characteristic of societal development, and that the role of planning (as with other ideological forms) lay in facilitating the resolution of the imbalances within society which impeded development, and by shortening the causal cycle, facilitating a more rapid advance of society to a higher stage of development. For society, being governed by certain laws of development (and these laws, it must be pointed out were, in Mao's opinion, independent of the human will),²²¹ pursued a certain course on its progression through time; while ideological cognizance of those laws might permit an ideological response to facilitate rather than hinder development, the subjective perception of such laws did not permit of an intervention to transform or alter those characteristics of society described by those laws. Rather, such subjective perception could be employed only to facilitate or impede the process through which those characteristics developed, and not in altering features which were inherent and fundamental to society

220. COSE, p. 76; Miscellany II, p. 276; Wansui (1967), pp. 203-4; Wansui (1969), p. 355.

221. PC-TDOP, p. 48; also MTTU, p. 112, Wansui (1969), p. 171; also LLL, pp. 34-5.

and its development. 222

If this interpretation is correct, we would expect to find Mao continuing to believe in the inevitable destruction of capitalist societies and their supersession by socialist societies. Indeed, in both the open polemics with the CPSU and in his Reading Notes, there is clear evidence to suggest Mao still believed strongly in this aspect of traditional Marxism. In the editorial Long Live Leninism (1960), this fate of capitalist societies was spelt out with a strength of conviction which leaves no room for suggesting any equivocation on Mao's part:

In the end the socialist system will replace the capitalist system. This is an objective law independent of human will. No matter how hard the reactionaries may try to prevent the advance of the wheel of history, revolution will take place sooner or later and will surely triumph. This applies to the replacement of one society by another throughout human history... 223

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222. This problem can be further explained by the fact that Mao perceived a distinction between universal laws of development and "laws" of each particular instance of development. The assertion of universal laws of development did not *a priori* disclose how those universal laws might manifest themselves in a particular historical context. However, while knowledge of the particular "law" facilitated a subjective or ideological response "correct" for that context, that response would appear limited by the necessary characteristic of the particular "law" of development to remain within the constraints imposed by that pattern of development universal to all societies. The subjective cognizance of the particular "law" would therefore appear not to be able to radically deflect society from the developmental course general to all societies, but to exploit those laws for the acceleration of society along a path described by the universal laws of development. This problem of the relationship of universal and particular "laws" will be discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section.
223. LLL, pp. 34-5; See also SW V, p. 515; XJ V, p. 497, where Mao asserted "In the final analysis, this is also true of the imperialist and capitalist systems, which are bound to be replaced by the socialist system"; also MTTU, p. 110; Wansui (1969), p. 170; "Capitalism leads to socialism, socialism leads to communism"; see also Miscellany I, p. 160; Wansui (1967), p. 4, where Mao looks ahead to a time when the dictatorship of the proletariat will have been established in the West.

And in the opening lines of his Reading Notes, Mao concurred with the judgement passed by the Soviet Manual that "socialism will 'inevitably' supersede capitalism and moreover will do so by 'revolutionary means'":

The proletarian socialist revolution is an "objective necessity". This way of putting it is fine and it should be put this way. "Objective necessity" (*keguan biranxing*) is a fine thing, and is a source of pleasure to people. To say that it is an objective necessity, means that the direction it takes (*zhuananyi*) does not hinge on the will (*yizhi*) of individuals. Like it or not, come it will.²²⁴

Needless to say, absent from Mao's predictions of the inevitable destruction of capitalism was any specification as to when this destruction would occur.²²⁵ While Mao's reading of history and the laws of development of society permitted him to assert capitalism's destruction as inevitable, it at the same time constrained him from attempting to impose a blanket formula or time-scale on the many different societies which constituted the capitalist world. Each society was a particular instance of the general laws of the development of society, and while each society represented a further demonstration of the universality of such laws, the difference in the concrete manifestation of those laws in each instance precluded any general prediction regarding capitalist societies as a whole. It was thus open to Mao to assert only the destruction of capitalism as "inevitable" in light of the laws he perceived at work in historical and social

224. COSE, p. 33; Miscellany II, p. 247; Wansui (1967), p. 167; Wansui (1969), p. 319; the translation at COSE, p. 33 has required some alteration.

225. See Miscellany I, p. 125; Wansui (1969), p. 245; "The final disintegration (of the West) is inevitable. The transitional period may last quite a while; it will not happen overnight".

development, and not to specify any time-table for the realization of the inevitable. As we have seen, the sequence of causation, while not indefinite, was indeterminate, and in Mao's view would certainly vary from society to society.

The notion of a sequence or cycle of causation through which society passed in its progression through time would seem to be eminently compatible with the division of the historical development of society into stages. It is clear that Mao continued (as in the Yan'an period) to regard the temporal progression of society as characterized by such different stages; "the development of society", he asserted in August 1964, "takes place by stages".²²⁶ Mao continued to perceive in history a series of major developmental stages through which society passed; these stages (primitive, slave, feudal, socialist, and in the future, communist) were no more than a recitation of the orthodox Marxist view of the stages of human history.²²⁷ Mao, however, believed that such major stages could themselves be divided into lesser stages which, while not witnessing a transformation in the dominant and fundamental characteristics of society, witnessed changes significant enough to establish a discrete temporal division between that period and another within the development of that society. For example, although Mao regarded primitive society as a period in history needing clarification, he perceived in its "million years or more" a "great many stages",²²⁸ such stages possibly having been produced by changes in the relationships formed during the course of labour during the

226. Miscellany II, p. 393; MTU, p. 226; Wansui (1969), p. 558.

227. Ibid.

228. Ibid.

long period of public ownership of primitive communes.²²⁹ Mao also believed that the family as a social unit had emerged during the last stage of primitive communism.²³⁰ During the Yan'an period, Mao had demonstrated a keen sensitivity to the importance of establishing the historical stages within the contemporary historical period. It was pointed out that the criteria employed in this temporal compartmentalization had been heavily influenced by the emphasis he placed on the CCP as central to the historical development of that stage in China's democratic revolution. This sensitivity to the historical periodization of the immediate past is also evident in the writings of the post-1955 period. In his important speech of January 1962, Mao asserted that

Twelve years have passed since the founding of the People's Republic of China. These twelve years can be divided into a first period of eight years and a second of four years. Nineteen-fifty to the end of 1957 constitute the first eight years. 1958 to the present is the second four years.²³¹

The period from 1950 to the end of 1957 was characterized, according to Mao, by the reform of the ownership system in both agriculture and industry, and by the rehabilitation and consolidation of the economy in the First Five Year Plan. However, what stands out as the most significant feature of this first period was the employment of Soviet methods of economic construction. It is clear that Mao regarded the policy of "leaning to one side" as the single most important characteristic identifying this period, and that which set

229. COSE, p. 68; Miscellany II, p. 270; Wansui (1967), p. 196; Wansui (1969), p. 348.

230. MTU, p. 115; Wansui (1969), p. 174.

231. TEWC, pp. 22-3; ZKDDZY, p. 23; also in MTU, p. 176; Wansui (1969), p. 414.

it apart historically from its neighbouring period. It is interesting to note that Mao regarded 1958 (rather than 1956 with the formulation of The Ten Great Relationships) as the turning point which signified an end to Chinese reliance on the Soviet model; in that year, with the establishment of the people's communes and the Great Leap Forward, China began to concretely assert its own approach to economic development. With this radical change in policy, a new stage had been reached in the period of socialist construction.²³²

In looking to the future, Mao perceived society as having to traverse a "transitional period" (*guodu shiqi*) on its progression towards a communist society. While occasionally equivocating on the stages within this period,²³³ it seems that he basically regarded the transitional period as constituted of two major stages.²³⁴ The first of these was the stage in which society would complete its transformation from capitalism to socialism, during which period, society could be categorized as a form of "underdeveloped socialism".²³⁵ During the second stage of the transition period, society would develop from a form of "underdeveloped (*bu fada*) socialism" to a "comparatively developed (*bijiao fada*) socialism, namely communism".²³⁶ The most important characteristic attributed by Mao to this transition period was the continuation of the struggle between capitalism and

232. TEWC, pp. 22-26; ZKDDZY, pp. 23-26; MTU, pp. 176-9; Wansui (1969), pp. 414-416.

233. See COSE, p. 34; Miscellany II, p. 248; Wansui (1967), p. 168; Wansui (1969), p. 320.

234. COSE, p. 58; Miscellany II, p. 264; Wansui (1967), p. 188; Wansui (1969), p. 340; in one source, Mao did indicate three stages as necessary for the completion of socialism; Wansui (1967), pp. 12-13.

235. COSE, p. 58; Miscellany II, p. 264; Wansui (1967), p. 188; Wansui (1969), p. 340.

236. Ibid.

socialism; "It is", he argued in July 1957, "a task for the entire transition period".²³⁷ Again, in October 1957, he argued that it was clear that "in proceeding through the transitional era from capitalism to socialism, the main (or fundamental) contradiction is the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between socialism and capitalism".²³⁸ The struggle between socialism and capitalism manifested itself within socialist society as a class struggle, and Mao was quite adamant that class struggle would remain a feature of socialist society during the transition to communism. In January 1957, Mao had stressed that "socialist society is a unity of opposites, in which contradictions, classes and class struggle exist",²³⁹ and in the early sixties, the continued existence of classes and class struggle in socialist society became a theme which came increasingly to the fore in his writings. In his 7,000 cadres speech of January 1962, Mao was to make an important theoretical statement concerning the nature of class struggle in socialist society:

In our country where the system of exploitation of man by man has already been abolished and the economic base of the landlord class and the bourgeoisie done away with, the reactionary classes are no longer as formidable as in the past...Therefore, we speak of them as the remnants of the reactionary classes. But in no case should we underestimate these remnants. We must carry on our struggle against them. The reactionary classes which have been overthrown still seek a comeback. And in socialist society new bourgeois elements continue to emerge. Classes and class struggle exist throughout the socialist stage. This struggle is long and complex and at times even very acute.²⁴⁰

237. SW V, p. 475; XJ V, p. 458.

238. Miscellany I, p. 75, also pp. 73-74; Wansui (1969), p. 125, also pp. 123-124; see also COSE, pp. 47-48; Miscellany II, p. 257; Wansui (1967), p. 179; Wansui (1969), p. 331.

239. SW V, p. 376; XJ V, p. 356.

240. TEWC, pp. 12-13; ZKDDZY, p. 13; MTTU, p. 168; Wansui (1969), p. 407.

Similarly, the continued existence of classes and class struggle within socialist society was also raised at the Beidaihe Conference (August 1962),²⁴¹ at the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee (September 1962),²⁴² at the Hangzhou Conference (May 1963),²⁴³ and in the important theoretical document which came to be known as The First Ten Points (also May 1963).²⁴⁴ The constant emergence of this theme bears witness to the increasing concern felt by Mao with respect to the domestic situation in the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward. This increasing concern has several implications for our analysis. Firstly, the heightened sensitivity to the problem of class struggle during the transitional period suggests a modification in emphasis along an important dimension of Mao's thought during the period 1955-64 period. While there is evidence to suggest that Mao had given thought to this problem in the late 1950s,²⁴⁵ his frequent references to it in the early 1960s suggest a realization that the problem was or had become more serious than he had initially realized. Consequently, Mao was to devote increased attention to and analysis of this problem. This change in emphasis does not however betoken a break in the development of Mao's thinking during this period; the existence of references to this problem in the late 1950s militates against such a conclusion. It suggests rather a change of emphasis which requires noting, for this renewed and more emphatic insistence on class struggle during the transitional period was to have repercussion some years later with the onset of the Cultural

241. Wansui (1969), pp. 423-429.

242. MTTU, p. 189; Wansui (1969), p. 431.

243. Miscellany II, p. 318; Wansui (1969), p. 440.

244. Ssu-ch'ing, p. 60; this document was identified by the Chinese in 1967 as having been written by Mao; see PR No. 11 (10 March 1967); a translation of The First Ten Points also appears in IS II:8 (May 1966), pp. 46-60.

245. See especially Mao's speech at the Hangzhou Conference of April 1958; Miscellany I, pp. 85-90.

Revolution. Secondly, as we shall observe in Chapter Five the documents of the Cultural Revolution demonstrate a declining optimism on Mao's part with regard the possibility of the realization of communism; and it would appear that the seeds for this fading optimism were sown in the early 1960s with the realization born of the failure and aftermath of the Great Leap Forward that class struggle would remain a serious and persistent problem throughout the transitional period, one which would require repeated attempts at resolution. In particular, Mao's recognition of the possibility that a 'new bourgeoisie' could emerge was to be related to this less than sanguine appreciation of the possibility of attaining communism. While this declining optimism was not to become fully manifest until the Cultural Revolution, it had its origins in the early 1960s with Mao's realization of the seeming intractability of class struggle during the transitional period and the possibility that the bourgeoisie could 'reemerge' to become a serious threat to the realization of socialism.

From his references to this problem, several points need to be made about the nature of socialist society within the transitional period which permitted the continuance of class struggle.

Firstly, the ownership system (the principal feature of the relations of production and a key factor in the relationship between classes) was not of a fully consolidated socialist type, and was differentiated into several different ownership systems, one of which was individual ownership, or the ownership of private property.²⁴⁶ The continued co-existence of these different ownership types (and especially the continuance of private property) signified that the transformation of the ownership system had not been complete; consequently, although the monopoly on ownership by the former dominant

246. MTU, p. 115; Wansui (1969), p. 174; also MDOCC, p. 265; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 17.

classes had been virtually destroyed, the ownership system which replaced it retained elements and structures not wholly incompatible with previous modes of ownership. Thus, while Mao regarded the problem of the ownership system as having been basically solved,²⁴⁷ he still regarded this differentiation in the ownership system as constituting a factor in the maintenance of class differences,²⁴⁸ and as a continuing source of class struggle; "we have said that the problem of ownership is solved basically but not completely. Class struggle has not died out".²⁴⁹ Elsewhere, Mao asserted that there had not been a "complete resolution" to either the problem of ownership or political authority,²⁵⁰ and it would appear evident that he perceived this incomplete resolution as an important factor in the continuance of class struggle during the transition period. Moreover, Mao appears to have regarded the differentiation in ownership signifying the incomplete resolution of the problem of ownership as a source of class conflict also characterizing the transition period in the Soviet Union; "the truth is that in their own society there is still class struggle, that is, struggle between socialism and capitalist remnants. But this they do not concede...If there are three types of ownership, there will be contradiction and struggle".²⁵¹

Secondly, it is clear from Mao's various references to this

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247. USW, p. 262; Wansui (1969), p. 115; also Miscellany I, pp. 73, 121; Wansui (1969), pp. 123, 223.
248. See MDOCC, p. 265; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 17. In this source, Mao refers to the relationship between the different ownership systems and the continuation of the difference between workers and peasants.
249. SW V, p. 494; XJ V, p. 476.
250. Miscellany I, p. 72; Wansui (1969), p. 122.
251. COSE, p. 107; Miscellany II, p. 299; Wansui (1967), p. 230; Wansui (1969), p. 382.

problem that he regarded the continued physical existence of formerly dominant classes within socialist society as a continuing (though he hoped, evanescent) source of conflict between classes. In assessing the impact of these "remnants" (*canyu*), as Mao termed them,²⁵² he appears to have made a distinction between their numerical strength and their ideological influence. In terms of actual numbers, those from the former dominant classes represented, as the term "remnants" implies, a very small proportion of the entire population. In April 1958, Mao had referred to these remnants as having been "reduced to mere drops in the ocean of the working people",²⁵³ and the communique of the Tenth Plenum (1962) talked of them as "a small number of persons making up only a tiny fraction of the total population...".²⁵⁴ The presence and activities of this "small number" of persons (former landlords, rich peasants and the old bourgeoisie) posed, nevertheless, a serious obstacle to the complete resolution of contradictions within the relations of production in that these remnants persevered with practices incompatible with the attempt to establish and consolidate a fully socialist ownership system and economy; these practices are detailed in The First Ten Points.²⁵⁵ However, of more apparent concern to Mao than the actual numerical strength of the formerly dominant classes, was the ideological influence they exerted within the realm of the superstructure. This concern found expression

252. See for example *Ibid.*; also MTTU, p. 189; Wansui (1969), p. 431; also Wansui (1967), pp. 82-3; also TEWC, p. 13; ZKDDZY, p. 13; MTTU, p. 168; Wansui (1969), p. 407.

253. PR No. 15 (10 June) 1958, p. 6.

254. *Ssu-ch'ing*, p. 60; In January 1962, Mao referred to "the landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and rightists" as comprising 4 or 5 per cent of the population; see TEWC, p. 15; ZKDDZY, p. 15; MTTU, p. 170; Wansui (1969), p. 409.

255. *Ssu'ch'ing*, p. 61.

in the wake of the Lushan Conference (1959), the struggle at which was, Mao believed, a continuation of class struggle in the realm of ideology:

...the form of the struggle is different as the era is different. As to the present, the social and economic systems have changed, but the legacy of the old era remains as reactionary ideology in the minds of a relatively large number of people. The ideology of the bourgeoisie and the upper stratum of the petty bourgeoisie will not change at a stroke. Change may take time, and a long period of time at that.²⁵⁶

The communique of the Tenth Plenum echoed this sentiment by asserting that "there still exist in society bourgeois influences, (and) the force of habit of the old society...".²⁵⁷ It is clear from a comparison of Mao's views on the actual numerical strength of the formerly dominant classes ("a small number" and a "tiny fraction") and their ideological influence which lived on in the minds of a "relatively large number" of people, that his concern with these remnants was largely focused on this latter problem of ideology. It is also clear that he believed the influence of such ideology to extend beyond the numerical limits of those remnants, and to constitute a negative feature of the ideologies of persons not objectively remnants of such classes.²⁵⁸ In a previous section, Mao's conception of ideology was interpreted to indicate a reasonably flexible approach to the restrictions imposed by objective class conditions on the formulation of ideology at an individual or sub-class level; in particular, two aspects of this approach (the possibility of a movement in personal ideology through

256. Wansui (1967), p. 277, cf. also pp. 82-3; CLG I:4, pp. 73-4.

257. Ssu-ch'ing, p. 60.

258. "There is bourgeois ideology amongst the workers". Miscellany I, p. 73; Wansui (1969), p. 123.

a process of remoulding facilitated by changed socio-economic factors, and the notion of a time-lag for the correct reflection of knowledge as ideology) have utility here in explaining Mao's belief that the influence of bourgeois ideology, and the habits of the old society, continued to persist in the minds of a relatively large number of people during the transition period. If it was possible for a former landlord or businessman (for example) to come to accept the ideology of the working class, it would not be unlikely (and Mao appears to have accepted this possibility) that peasants or workers from the old society could likewise become imbued with the prevailing and systematized (if increasingly anachronistic) ideology of their former masters; and this especially so as one of the functions of such ideology was to create acceptance and acquiescence on the part of the oppressed classes to their exclusion from economic privilege or political power. Consequently, because of the time-lag involved in the process of ideological reflection, and the unevenness of that time-lag across a class or population, the influence of this ideology might persist beyond the virtual destruction of the social conditions which gave it generation; and, moreover, the differentiation of the ownership system (including a form of private property) plus the continued physical presence of members of former dominant classes, could act as negative factors retarding the divestment of "bourgeois" ideology by workers and peasants, and its substitution by the ideology of the proletariat by extending the time-lag for the "correct" reflection in ideology of material movements within society and the economy.

This differentiation of the ownership system plus the continued influence of bourgeois ideology, must be regarded as important

factors contributing to Mao's perception of a third feature deemed characteristic of the transitional period; that is, the possibility of the emergence of a "new bourgeoisie". In his January 1962 speech, Mao had asserted "in socialist society new bourgeois elements continue to emerge",²⁵⁹ and in The First Ten Points, Mao complained that "in addition to the old bourgeoisie who continue to engage in speculation and profiteering activities, there also emerge in today's society new bourgeois elements who have become rich by speculation".²⁶⁰ Moreover, Mao declared to an Algerian Cultural Delegation in April 1964 that there were many such "new bourgeois elements" within the party itself.²⁶¹ Mao's belief that a "new bourgeoisie" could emerge during the period of socialist transition was predicated upon certain assumptions, none of which included the notion that such a "new bourgeoisie" could emerge *ex nihilo* and without certain necessary predisposing social and economic factors. We have already stressed that the economy of the transition period was not (and was not regarded by Mao) as a fully consolidated socialist type. Indeed, the actual attainment of such an economy would still have been, in Mao's opinion, an "underdeveloped" form of socialism, as it would continue to retain certain economic structures and practices incompatible with the final transition to communism. We are, therefore, talking of a society and economy (to use Marx's graphic phrase) "still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it has emerged".²⁶²

259. TEWC, p. 13; ZKDDZY, p. 13; MTTU, p. 168; Wansui (1969), p. 407.

260. Ssu-ch'ing, p. 61.

261. Wansui (1969), p. 488; see also, p. 424, where Mao declared "the bourgeoisie can re-emerge (*xinsheng de*), and this is what happened in the Soviet Union".

262. Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", in The First International and After, Op. cit., p. 346.

The factor of differentiation in the ownership system (including the retention of some private ownership) must be regarded as predisposing to the emergence of a "new bourgeoisie". However, to fully understand Mao's position on this issue, it is necessary to raise his views on the "dual nature" (*liangmianxing*) of China's peasantry. The peasants were, Mao believed, by virtue of their economic position and class outlook, part of China's petit-bourgeoisie.²⁶³ As small producers, they retained a certain ambivalence (or "dual nature") towards the socialization of property, and this ambivalence would persist until the realization of a system of ownership by the whole people in the rural areas.²⁶⁴ Until that time, the peasants would, Mao remarked drily, "remain peasants".²⁶⁵ In the communique of the Tenth Plenum, some of these small producers were attributed with producing a "spontaneous tendency toward capitalism",²⁶⁶ and in Mao's actual speech to the Tenth Plenum, it is made clear that the persistence of the petit-bourgeoisie (made possible by a continued differentiation in the ownership system),²⁶⁷ was a significant factor in the production of a "new bourgeoisie":

We can now affirm that classes do exist in socialist countries and that class struggle undoubtedly exists. Lenin said: After the victory of the revolution, because of the existence of the bourgeoisie internationally, because of the existence of bourgeois remnants

263. SW V, p. 474; XJ V, p. 457.

264. Miscellany I, p. 128; Wansui (1969), p. 247.

265. Ibid.; also Wansui (1967), pp. 12, 20, 27; Wansui (1969), p. 282; see also COSE, p. 70; Miscellany II, p. 272; Wansui (1967), p. 198; Wansui (1969), p. 349.

266. Ssu-ch'ing, p. 60; see also SW V, pp. 260-1; XJ V, p. 244; SUICC, pp. 302-3, where Mao ties in the "spontaneous tendencies towards capitalism" with a "scattered small peasant economy".

267. MDOCC, p. 265; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 17.

internally, because the petit bourgeoisie exists and continually generates a bourgeoisie, therefore the classes which have been overthrown within the country will continue to exist for a long time to come and may even attempt restoration. 268

Mao's perception of the emergence of a "new bourgeoisie" was, therefore, a function of his belief that while there continued a differentiated ownership system which maintained both the peasantry as a class and its dual nature, the socio-economic factors existed for the generation of individuals who gravitated towards a form of economic activity characteristic of an incipient bourgeoisie; profiteering and speculation, the exploitation of hired hands, engaging in usury, and the buying and selling of land. 269

To the extent that Mao perceived a differentiated ownership system as the fundamental factor creating the social and economic conditions for a regeneration of the bourgeoisie, his analysis must be regarded as a materialist explanation. Mao did of course perceive other factors, such as bureaucratism and the separation of the cadres from the masses, as related to the generation of a 'new bourgeoisie'. These factors impressed themselves upon Mao in the early 1960s as his control over the Party waned and he perceived a move towards a style of party work which was corrupt, distanced itself from the masses, and which fostered the mentality of the professional bureaucrat by perceiving rank and privilege as rightful attribute of those within the Party.²⁷⁰ This heightened suspicion of the bureaucratism which emerged within the Communist Party in the early 1960s should not however be perceived as isolated from Mao's more general analysis

268. MTU, p. 189; Wansui (1969), p. 431. Emphasis added.

269. Ssu-ch'ing, p. 61.

270. MTU, p. 217.

of the problems afflicting Chinese society. As we have seen, Mao believed the Party to be a trans-class organization which allowed class struggle within society to be 'reflected' within the confines of the Party. If the 'new bourgeoisie' were (as Mao admitted)²⁷¹ appearing with the ranks of Party, then this was not merely an untoward symptom of organization as such, but a manifestation in particular form of certain characteristics of society at large. Of these characteristics, the unresolved problem of ownership was still the most fundamental, and this gave rise to the contradictions and struggle which were reflected within the Party and found manifestation in the bureaucratism which so concerned Mao during the early 1960s.

One assumes, however, (and there is nothing in the texts to contradict such an assumption) that Mao anticipated the attainment of a fully socialist ownership system (that is, ownership by the whole people) would witness the termination of the problem posed by the "new bourgeoisie"; for without differentiation in the ownership system with its consequent maintenance of class distinctions, and the concomitant extinction of the "dual nature" of the petit-bourgeoisie (including the peasantry), the socio-economic factors upon which the emergence of a "new bourgeoisie" was contingent would no longer exist.²⁷²

271. Wansui (1969), p. 488.

272. This interpretation is significantly different from that offered by Joseph Esherick, who argues that Mao had made the "critical leap from talking about class in terms of ownership of the means of production, to talking about control of the means of production". Yet, as we have seen, there is plentiful evidence in the Mao texts to indicate a continuing close connection between the unresolved problem of ownership and the emergence of a "new bourgeoisie"; see "On the 'Restoration of Capitalism': Mao and Marxist Theory", Modern China, Vol. 5, No. 1 (January 1979), pp. 41-78, esp. p. 64. Emphasis in original.

In so saying, it would appear that Mao regarded this problem as persisting at least until the end of the first stage of the transition period, until the attainment of an "underdeveloped" form of socialism was manifested by the establishment of such an ownership system.²⁷³

As with Mao's predictions regarding the "inevitable" destruction of the capitalist world, his predictions regarding the duration of this transition period are necessarily imprecise. While his view of historical development permitted him to maintain a general concept of society's future development, such a view did not permit of a prescience with regard to the exact manner in which that future development might make itself manifest; as he was to point out at Chengdu (1958), "Concrete affairs cannot be foretold".²⁷⁴ Consequently, estimations of the duration of the transition period are usually safely couched in guarded asseverations asserting that it would probably last "a very long time".²⁷⁵ "It is hard to say for sure right now", he remarked in October 1957, "just how long the transition period will be". However, it would, he added, "go on for many years".²⁷⁶ In the communique of the Tenth Plenum (1962), the transition period was depicted as lasting "for scores of years or even longer",²⁷⁷ and elsewhere, socialist society is asserted to constitute "a relatively long historical stage" in the development of society.²⁷⁸

While Mao was, for most of the 1955-64 period, content to perceive the transitional period as a lengthy one whose duration could not be

273. "The central manifestation of socialism is the realization of complete socialist system of ownership by the whole people"; Miscellany I, p. 131; Wansui (1969), p. 250.

274. MTTU, p. 112; Wansui (1969), p. 171.

275. SW V, p. 475; XJ V, p. 458; see also SW V, pp. 409, 423; XJ V, pp. 390, 404.

276. SW V, p. 500, XJ V, p. 482.

277. Ssu-ch'ing, p. 60.

278. See Point II of The First Ten Points in Ibid.

precisely foretold, his utterances during the Great Leap Forward of 1958 do indicate an expectation that China might after all be able to accomplish the transition in the near future. The rapid establishment of the people's communes and the rectification campaign to resolve the problems of the mutual relations and ideology would have the consequence (Mao hoped) of permitting a 'leap forward' in the Chinese economy. Rapidly increased production of grain and steel²⁷⁹ would create the material conditions to allow not only the elevation of living standards, but a shift from distribution according to labour to distribution according to need.²⁸⁰ At the Chengdu Conference (March 1958), Mao suggested that China's agriculture could be transformed in 8-10 years,²⁸¹ and in May 1958, he raised the possibility that China would be able to increase its steel production from 11 to 40 million tons in 5 years and catch up with Great Britain's steel production in 7 years and with the United States' in 15 years.²⁸² Likewise, Mao confidently predicted a massive increase in grain production. In November 1958, he predicted that China's grain production would rise in one year from 750 billion catties to 1,050 billion catties, and that in three years per capita grain production would almost double.²⁸³ Similarly, cotton production would increase from 67 to 100 million piculs in the space of one year.²⁸⁴

As a result of these dramatic increases in production, China could confidently expect to become a powerful socialist country in a relatively short period of time. In May 1958, Mao predicted that China could become a "modernized, industrialized, and highly cultured great power" within 15 years.²⁸⁵ A similar prediction was made in early 1959.²⁸⁶

279. MTU, pp. 126, 130.

280. Miscellany I, p. 134; Wansui (1969), p. 253.

281. MTU, p. 105.

285. Miscellany I, p. 97.

282. Miscellany I, p. 123.

286. Miscellany I, p. 158.

283. Miscellany I, pp. 134-5.

284. Ibid.

Moreover, the economic benefits that Mao expected from the Great Leap Forward would have the effect of accelerating China's progression towards the historical goal of communism. In November 1958, Mao referred to the expectations of some Chinese that a transitional period of 3-5 years was now a possibility,²⁸⁷ and in December Mao suggested that China could strive for a 'basic transformation' in 5 years and a 'thorough transformation' in 10-15 years.²⁸⁸ Again in December 1958, Mao predicted that

To enter communism, 15 years, 20 years, or an even longer period is required. To accomplish the socialist system of ownership of all the people may take at least three or four years, during the second five-year plan or as long as five or six years, during the third five-year plan. 289

As we have seen, Mao's statements on the length of the transition period during the years 1955-64 were usually vague and imprecise. On this theme, the texts of the Great Leap Forward thus appear in some contrast to the texts of the rest of this period. The failure of the Great Leap Forward to produce the rapid economic development which Mao expected led very rapidly to his abandonment of this premature anticipation of a transition to socialism and the final establishment of communism. In the wake of the Great Leap Forward, the texts revert to guarded and imprecise references to the exact length of the transitional period. In terms of Mao's views on historical time and the future, the Great Leap Forward was thus to lead to a brief utopian interlude in Mao's thought, an interlude which was, as Starr suggests, abandoned very rapidly as the failures of the Great Leap Forward became apparent.²⁹⁰

While this imprecision in Mao's predictions emanated from a theoretical conviction that the actual manifestation of the laws of

287. Miscellany I, p. 131.

288. Miscellany I, p. 141.

289. Miscellany I, p. 138.

290. Starr, "Maoism and Marxist Utopianism"; *Op.cit.*, pp. 56, 58-9.

development of society could not be anticipated in detail, it was those same set of theoretical convictions which allowed him to assert as "inevitable" the final transition from socialism to communism; for it was, as we have seen, the general trend for society to advance, and for each cycle or wave of this advance to establish a higher stage of development. Moreover, socialism, like all products of history, necessarily proceeded through a process of emergence, development, and then decay and extinction.²⁹¹ As a result, a higher form of society would necessarily supersede socialism; "According to dialectics", Mao asserted in January 1957, "as surely as a man must die, the socialist system as a historical phenomenon will come to an end some day, to be negated by the communist system".²⁹² While here again we are given little detail of the process which will result in the final transition, it is possible to piece together something of the factors that Mao perceived as necessary to permit such a transition. With the establishment and consolidation of a fully socialist ownership system, the first stage of the transition period would be complete and the preconditions for the elimination of classes achieved. During this progressive establishment of a fully socialist ownership system, the various classes other than the working class would themselves make a transition, gradually transforming themselves until they become indistinguishable from the working class. This process of the transition of classes was raised in a speech of October 1957:

Though small in number, the working class, and the working class alone, has great promise. The other classes are classes in transition, they all have to make the transition towards the working class. In the first step of this

291. USW, p. 71; Wansui (1969), p. 92.

292. SW V, p. 377; XJ V, p. 356. Elsewhere Mao asserted that "Even socialism will cease to exist one day"; Miscellany I, p. 50; Wansui (1969), p. 77.

transition, the peasants become collective peasants and in the second step workers on state farms. The bourgeoisie will be eliminated, but not physically; the bourgeoisie will be eliminated as a class, but remoulded as individuals.²⁹³

Mao obviously, therefore, looked ahead to a society in which the progressive "proletarianization" of the other classes within society would remove the distinct barriers between classes, and the dissolution of those barriers creating the conditions for a transition to a classless (or perhaps, a one-class) society. A concomitant of this progressive "proletarianization" would be the continuing industrialization and mechanization of society and the increasing complexity and interrelatedness which this brought,²⁹⁴ as the productive forces established an ever increasing capacity to master and transform nature. In his Reading Notes, Mao was to indicate that it was necessary to combine changes in the system of ownership with changes in the technological infrastructure in order to facilitate this dissolution of class barriers; "When state ownership and mechanization are integrated we will be able to begin truly to consolidate the worker-peasant alliance, and the differences between workers and peasants will surely be eliminated step by step".²⁹⁵ There is also, as one would expect, a belief that China would need to acquire a higher degree of economic productivity and sophistication in order to make the transition to communism; at the time of the transition, "material

293. SW V, p. 504; XJ V, pp. 486-7.

294. "Industry is different from agriculture. In industry, many factors affect one another through their mutual relationships. To develop steel, we must develop coal, electricity, etc. There can be no missing link. In agriculture, there are fewer factors affecting one another". Miscellany I, p. 133; Wansui (1969), p. 252.

295. COSE, p. 47; Miscellany II, p. 256; Wansui (1967), pp. 178-9; Wansui (1969), p. 330.

production...will be most ample (*da wei fengfu*)", Mao predicted.²⁹⁶ His belief that a reasonable level of economic abundance was necessary to make the transition was linked to the fact that this would allow a fundamental transformation in the underlying premise motivating and guiding the distribution and allocation of economic rewards within society. During the socialist stage, distribution would continue to function according to the maxim "to each according to his work" (*an lao fen pei*),²⁹⁷ but the transition to communism would only be complete when this had been transformed to "distribution according to need" (*an xu fen pei*). It will be remembered that the distribution system constituted an element of the relations of production, and Mao regarded this transformation of the distribution system as the "revolution" within the relations of production which would herald the onset of communism:

The transition to communism certainly is not a matter of one class overthrowing another. But that does not mean there will be no social revolution, because the superseding of one kind of production relations by another is a qualitative leap, i.e., a revolution...So to go from socialism's "distribution according to labour" to communism's "distribution according to need" has to be called a revolution in the production relations. Of course, "distribution according to need" has to be brought about gradually. Perhaps when the principal material goods can be adequately supplied we can begin to carry out such distribution with those goods, extending the practice to other goods on the basis of the further development of the productive forces...²⁹⁸

Elsewhere, Mao asserted a narrowing of wage differentials as a

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296. COSE, p. 58; Miscellany II, p. 264; Wansui (1967), p. 188; Wansui (1969), p. 340.
297. Wansui (1967), pp. 12-13.
298. COSE, pp. 62-3; Miscellany II, p. 267; Wansui (1967), pp. 191-2; Wansui (1969), pp. 343-4; for further references to this point, see COSE, pp. 68-9; Miscellany II, p. 271; Wansui (1967), p. 197; Wansui (1969), pp. 348-9; also MDOCC, pp. 265-6; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 17.

further necessary precondition to this transformation in the distribution system; "In the future, when social products become more abundant and the low wages are raised and get closer to the high wages, we will be entering communism. In regard to "to each according to his labour" and "to each according to his need", how do we equalize? It goes from low to high".²⁹⁹

The picture that emerges of the transition to communism is therefore one in which mechanization and industrialization coupled with the consolidation of a fully socialist ownership system would lead to the obliteration of the distinction between classes, and that on this basis, the increased level of productivity would permit of a gradual transformation of the distribution system until allocation would be based upon distribution according to need. It is important to note, however, that the assertion of an economic sufficiency as a precondition for this "revolution" in the relations of production was not the same as asserting as a precondition the complete mechanization or industrialization of society. In fact, Mao denied that the complete mechanization of China would ever be a practical feasibility.³⁰⁰ Neither was he asserting as a precondition the complete exhaustion of the potential of the forces of production or the attainment of the ultimate capacity of society's economic forces; for it is evident that Mao did not anticipate that the expansion of technology or the development of the forces of production would abate after this transition to communism. On the contrary, according to his view of the development of society, the "revolution" in the relations of production in which there was a fundamental change in the

299. Miscellany I, p. 134; Wansui (1969), p. 253.

300. MTU, p. 104; Wansui (1969), p. 165.

distribution system (this predicated on anterior changes within the superstructure, in political consciousness and so on),³⁰¹ would necessarily lead to a further expansion of the forces of production; and, moreover, the forces of production would continue to expand throughout the period of communist society. Mao believed that man's capacity to comprehend and control the forces of nature to his own advantage would continue to increase, and that this potential would act as the fundamental source of imbalance within society, creating contradictions (albeit not contradictions of a class character) which would continue to impel society through its spiral advance through time. This belief in the continuing development of the forces of production within a communist society emerged as early as the April 1956 editorial on the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in a section which, in its language and sentiment, indicates that it was either written by Mao or directly inspired by him; "In a socialist or communist society, technical innovations and changes in the social system will continue to take place. Otherwise the development of society would come to a stand-still and society could no longer advance. Humanity is still in its youth. The road it will yet traverse will be longer by no one knows how many times than the road it has already travelled".³⁰² Later in that same year, Mao indicated that this continued development of the forces of production in a communist society would give rise to the same sequence of contradictions as occurred previously in class society:

Will there still be revolutions in the future
when all the imperialists in the world are overthrown

301. See for example, Miscellany I, p. 228; Wansui (1967), p. 252; also COSE, p. 58; Miscellany II, p. 264; Wansui (1967), p. 188; Wansui (1969), p. 340.

302. NCNA 1531 (5 April) 1956, Suppt. 238, p. 5.

and classes are eliminated? What do you think? In my view, there will still be the need for revolution. The social system will still need to be changed and the term "revolution" will still be in use. Of course, revolutions then will not be of the same nature as those in the era of class struggle. But there will still be contradictions between the relations of production and the productive forces, between the superstructure and the economic base. When the relations of production become unsuitable, they will have to be overthrown. If the superstructure (ideology and public opinion included) protects the kind of relations of production the people dislike, they will transform it.³⁰³

Similarly, in his Sixty Articles on Work Methods (1958), Mao asserted that communist society would be subject to ceaseless "struggles between advanced and backward techniques",³⁰⁴ and in his Reading Notes of the early 1960s, he reiterated that "in the period of communism there will still be uninterrupted development".³⁰⁵ Elsewhere in that source, "technological revolution" was predicted as a feature of the development of communist society.³⁰⁶

That communist society would continue to pursue a like causation sequence to that witnessed during class society, is also evidenced by Mao's assertion that communist society would pass through many stages during its development. While there was still a formal reassertion of the Marxist-Leninist belief that there would be two

303. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, pp. 318-9.

304. MP, p. 65; Wansui (suppt.), p. 33.

305. COSE, pp. 57-8; Miscellany II, p. 264; Wansui (1967), p. 187; Wansui (1969), p. 339.

306. COSE, p. 71; Miscellany II, pp. 272-3; Wansui (1967), p. 199; Wansui (1969), pp. 350-1.

major stages in Communist society,³⁰⁷ it is clear that Mao perceived this future society as passing through stages far more numerous than this; "in the communist era there will be many, many phases of development (*hen duo hen duo de fazhan jieduan*)" he asserted in the Sixty Articles,³⁰⁸ and in the Reading Notes, he predicted that "communism will surely have to pass through many (*hen duo*) stages and many revolutions".³⁰⁹

Thus, while communism still represented for Mao the "ideal" society and mankind's "bright destiny",³¹⁰ the image envisaged was significantly different from that contemplated during the Yan'an period; for after 1955 the notion of a settled society of perpetual peace and harmony was replaced by the anticipation of a society in

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307. "For now we are speaking of communist society as divided into two stages, a lower and a higher. This is what Marx and his circle foresaw based on conditions of social development at that time. After entering the higher stage communist society will develop into a new stage, and new goals and tasks will assuredly present themselves". COSE, p. 100; Miscellany II, p. 294; Wansui (1967), pp. 224-5; Wansui (1969), p. 376; see also Miscellany I, p. 142; Wansui (1969), p. 262. It would seem, in fact, that Mao tended to muddle the distinction between the transition period, which as we have seen he divided into two stages (both of which were prior to the actual attainment of communism), and the two stages of communist society posited by Marx and Lenin, the first of which incorporated Mao's transition period, the latter incorporating the higher stage of communism. See Marx's "Critique of the Gotha Programme", in The First International and After, Op. cit., esp. pp. 346-8; and Lenin's "The State and Revolution", Selected Works, Op. cit., II, pp. 304-310.
308. MP, p. 65; Wansui (suppt.), p. 33.
309. COSE, p. 71; Miscellany II, pp. 272-3; Wansui (1967), p. 199; Wansui (1969), pp. 350-1; see also COSE, pp. 57-8; Miscellany II, p. 264; Wansui (1967), p. 187; Wansui (1969), p. 339, where Mao talks of the "many (*xu duo*) different stages" through which communist society might pass. The division of communist society into stages was also raised at Chengdu (1958); see MTTU, p. 110; Wansui (1969), p. 170; cf. Miscellany I, p. 204; Wansui (1967), p. 127; and in Mao's "Talk on Questions of Philosophy", MTTU, pp. 227-8; Miscellany II, pp. 394-5; Wansui (1969), pp. 559-60.
310. NCNA 1717 (31 December) 1956, Suppt. 250, p. 23; also SW V, p. 384; XJ V, p. 363.

which development would continue, which would still be characterized by struggle and contradiction, and which would have to pass through numerous stages on its relentless progression through time. Mao could not conceive of a society which would ever come to rest in some finished state in which the imperative for development and consequent struggle had been finally expunged. The contradiction and struggle engendered in his future society could not, as a result of the dissolution of class barriers and the establishment of a system of ownership by the whole people, be of a class character; nevertheless, there would still be struggles between "progress and conservatism, the advanced and the backward, (and) positive and negative",³¹¹ as imbalances created by the continuing development of the forces of production created contradictions within the fabric of the social system.

The persistence of struggle and contradiction in Mao's vision of the future society led in turn to some equivocation in his views on the withering away of the state with the arrival of communism. While this aspect of Marxism-Leninism was still frequently invoked³¹² and still represented the dominant aspect of Mao's thinking on this subject (one suspects because of his conviction that all products of history must eventually perish),³¹³ there does creep in some hesitation as to the possibility of doing away with the organs of "restraint" (if not coercion) in a society in which contradiction and struggle would continue. Mao's view on the continued necessity for courts is a case in point:

311. NCNA 1531 (5 April) 1956, Suppt. 238, p. 5; see also SW V, pp. 338-9; XJ V, p. 319.

312. *Ibid.*, p. 3; also MDOCC, pp. 263-4; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 16; also Miscellany I, pp. 146-7; Wansui (1969), p. 267.

313. Miscellany I, pp. 146-7; Wansui (1969), p. 267; also Miscellany I, p. 205; Wansui (1967), p. 127.

Our state organs are organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Take the courts for instance, their function is to deal with counter-revolutionaries, but that is not all, for they have to settle numerous disputes among the people. It looks as if courts will still be needed ten thousand years from now. For when classes are eliminated, there will still be contradictions between the advanced and the backward, there will still be struggles and scuffles among people, and there will still be all sorts of disturbances. What a mess there would be without a court! However, the struggles will then be of a different nature, different from class struggle. The court will be different in nature too.

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Similarly, in his debate with the Soviet Manual, Mao indicated that the abolition of the state would be contingent not only upon the abolition of classes internally, but also upon the elimination of imperialism internationally:

Page 639 says, "In the higher stages of communism the state will become unnecessary and gradually diminish". Nonetheless this will require certain international conditions. If someone else has state machinery and you do not, it is dangerous. Page 640 says that even after communism is established, as long as imperialist countries exist, the state will continue to be necessary. This position is correct.

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Moreover, it appears that Mao conceived of this future society as retaining some form of socio-political structure of which the commune would remain (as it had during the transition period)³¹⁶ the "basic mechanism" or "basic level structure" (*jiceng jigou*) of society,³¹⁷ although the important relationship between communes and

314. SW V, p. 338; XJ V, p. 319.

315. COSE, p. 99; Miscellany II, p. 293; Wansui (1967), p. 224; Wansui (1969), p. 375. Mao also predicated the abolition of the armed forces after the attainment of communism as contingent upon a favourable international environment; see Miscellany I, p. 76; Wansui (1969), p. 126.

316. Wansui (1967), p. 19; Wansui (1969), p. 282.

317. COSE, p. 134; Miscellany I, p. 132; Wansui (1967), p. 120; Wansui (1969), p. 251; also Miscellany I, p. 132; Wansui (1969), p. 251.

the social mechanism for their integration into a cohesive society is not mentioned. This rather vague notion of a collectivity of communes leaves an impression of what might be called a "Proudhonesque anarchism" in Mao's vision of the future, a tendency otherwise in some tension with the Leninist centralist perspective of his thinking. It will be remembered that Mao had been an advocate of federalism during the Yan'an period, and it is possible that this former intellectual element may have influenced him to envisage the future society as constituted of a loose federation of communes. Whatever form of social mechanism he contemplated for the organization of communes, Mao made it abundantly clear that the arrival of the communist society would witness, if anything, an intensification of social discipline, this intensification necessitated by the new techniques formulated within society's forces of production; "When a communist society is attained, labour discipline is bound to be even more strict than it is presently because the high level of automation will require ever higher exactitude of people's labour and conduct".³¹⁸ This stern and disciplined regime is in some contrast to the relaxed and somewhat self-willed idyll raised by Marx and Engels in The German Ideology,³¹⁹ but here again Mao does not indicate how this discipline is to be imposed. The fact that he perceived the possibility of individuals clinging to backward productive relationships and ideas grown anachronistic through advancements

318. COSE, p. 100; Miscellany II, p. 294; Wansui (1967), pp. 224-5; Wansui (1969), p. 376.

319. "...in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic". Op. cit., p. 54.

within the forces of production, suggests that he did not rule out the possibility of at least some social mechanism (such as the courts referred to above) to regulate the struggle which would result as a consequence.³²⁰ Moreover, the fact that Mao believed the family as a social unit (along with its functions of discipline and socialization) would disappear in the future,³²¹ reinforces the suggestion that he envisaged some alternate form of regulation and discipline. Just how this would be constituted we are not told.

If Mao's view of the laws of the development of human society permitted him to assert that there would be continuous development and numerous stages within communist society, it also bound him (by virtue of an extension of that logic) to admit that communist society as an historical phenomenon must also eventually disappear, to be superseded by something else, perhaps some more advanced form of social organization. In fact, Mao's futuristic references indicate that he was quite prepared to apply that logic even to communist society, and in so doing assert its eventual demise. Communist society, rather than representing a temporal plateau, arrival at which would signify the final exhaustion of the developmental impulses of society, was merely another (albeit very important) stage in the progression and advancement of society. Thus while communist society might persist for "thousands and thousands of years",³²² it eventually would come to an

320. In the Sixty Articles (1958), Mao predicted that "when the transition is over and classes are eliminated, the politics of a country become purely a matter of internal relationship among the people"; MP, p. 65; Wansui (suppt.), p. 33. However, this rather enigmatic reference does not bring us any closer to understanding how Mao viewed this "internal relationship".

321. MTTU, pp. 115-6; Wansui (1969), p. 174.

322. MTTU, p. 227; Miscellany II, p. 394; Wansui (1969), p. 559.

end. At the Chengdu Conference (1958), Mao indicated, in a most interesting passage, that his projections into the future were not limited by the demise of communism, but extended even to the portended extinction of the solar system:

The universe, too, undergoes transformation, it is not eternal. Capitalism leads to socialism, socialism leads to communism, and communist society must still be transformed, it will also have a beginning and an end, it will certainly be divided into stages, or they will give it another name, it cannot remain constant...There is nothing in the world that does not arise, develop and disappear. Monkeys turned into men, mankind arose; in the end the whole human race will disappear, it may turn into something else, at that time the earth itself will also cease to exist. The earth must certainly be extinguished, the sun too will grow cold...All things must have a beginning and an end...323

A similar vision of the distant future emerged also in Mao's "Talk on Questions of Philosophy" (August 1964), in which he expressed an optimism, seemingly inspired by his faith in historical progression and advance, that the eventual demise of mankind would witness the emergence of "something more advanced than mankind":

Mankind will also finally meet its doom. When the theologians talk about doomsday, they are pessimistic and terrify people. We say the end of mankind is something which will produce something more advanced than mankind. Mankind is still in its infancy.324

Mao's view of the future was therefore obviously not constrained by any notion of a communist society representing the final utopia toward which society was progressing, and which once attained, would

323. MTTU, p. 110; Wansui (1969), p. 170; cf. Miscellany I, p. 204; Wansui (1967), p. 127.

324. MTTU, p. 228; Miscellany II, pp. 394-5; Wansui (1969), p. 559.

signal the cessation of the struggles and contradictions of the developmental impulse which had brought society to such a state. On the contrary, in asserting the continued operation of those impulses during communist society, Mao indicated a willingness to apply the same logic to communist society as to any other society, all societies being governed by the same laws of development. In so doing, he gave witness to an internal consistency and logic within his thought which refused to contemplate for communist society a dispensation from the governance of those laws which bound the development of all societies. Thus, while communist society might manifest those laws in a particular fashion, and most obviously not producing from the imbalance caused by developments within the forces of production the contradictions of class within the relations of production, it would still demonstrate the universality of such laws by pursuing the same pattern or sequence of causation and development as its class-ridden relations.

The emergence of this internal consistency in Mao's thought had a logical concomitant also in his greatly lessened interest in the virtues of the distant past. It will be remembered that during the Yan'an period, Mao had demonstrated an almost atavistic enthusiasm for the positive characteristics of primitive society, and that his predictions for the portended era of perpetual peace were heavily coloured by elements of that atavism. This feature of his thinking virtually disappeared after 1955, and it would appear that the logic imposed by the view of the development of society which he came to

adopt was an important agent in the demise of this retrospection.³²⁵
 For all societies were marked by contradiction and struggle, primitive society being no exception; why then ruminate on a society of the distant past which exhibited the same characteristics? If anything, Mao's view of historical time after 1955, in looking less to the past for inspiration, incorporated an increased sensitivity to the future, that sensitivity conditioned however by a somewhat less sanguine assessment which perceived the future in largely the same analytical terms as the present and past. While not lacking in vision, there is absent from this view of the future the eschatological impulse which prompted his predictions of Yan'an days. "As for blind faith in the future", Mao remarked at the Supreme State Conference in January 1958, "our aims are concerned with the future. We believe that to put trust in the future is quite right, though our trust should not be blind".³²⁶

III. Philosophy of Science: The Derivation of Laws of History

During the Yan'an period, Mao had adopted an idiosyncratic form of inductionism as the basis of his approach to the investigation

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325. This change in Mao's position is clearly reflected in a statement made before the Supreme State Conference on 28 January 1958:

As for despising the past, this is not to say that there was nothing good in the past. There were indeed good things in the past. But always to put so much stress on the past, every day thinking of Yü, T'ang, Wen Wang, Wu Wang, the Duke of Chou and Confucius-- I don't believe in this way of looking at history...I consider human history advances. One generation is not as good as another--people who went before are not as good as those who follow later...; MTU, pp. 93-4; CLG I:4, p. 13.

326. Ibid.

of the functioning of society and historical development. This inductionism insisted (as classical inductionism does) on building from the particular to the general, asserting that only through numerous antecedent specific observations could generalizations regarding the behaviour of phenomena be formulated with any confidence. Inquiry commenced by such numerous observations of a phenomenon in order to ascertain its behaviour, rather than asserting a probable explanation in advance of testing and allowing that testing to evaluate the accuracy of the original explanation or hypothesis. While Mao (in theory at least) insisted on orthodox inductionism at this level, his view of it departed from the orthodox in asserting that "laws" or generalizations could be derived from observations of the regularities of a particular instance of a category, but that these could not be assumed as exactly reduplicable in any other instance within that category, and this because all instances were likely to demonstrate some variability which set each apart from related instances. Thus, while Mao came strangely close to Popper's critique of inductionism by asserting the possible variability of instance $n + 1$, Mao went even further by stating that generalizations or laws derived from observations of regularities within a particular instance of a category could not be assumed as indicating an exactitude of similarity in any other related instance within that category. In order to provide laws or generalizations having such capacity, Mao was thus obliged to divorce the descriptive or analytical principle describing the behaviour of a phenomenon from the content of the particular instances which had permitted the formulation of such theoretical conclusions, thus leaving only an abstract axiom or law devoid of the restraints of the particular.

It is not surprising that this view of scientific method correlated, during the Yan'an period, almost exactly with Mao's view of Marxism. For while Mao had insisted on the universal applicability of Marxism's central abstractions, he denied vigorously that the assertion of the axiomatic status of those abstractions could disclose *a priori* the manner in which the described phenomenon might behave in any particular instance wherein that phenomenon occurred. Such disclosure, once again, was the subject for an "inductionist-style" inquiry into the behaviour of that phenomenon within the specific instance. It would seem that such a method came perilously close to representing (unrecognized by Mao) a deductive method in which an hypothesis required constantly fresh verification. However, the important point is that, in Mao's mind, the abstractions of Marxism which he employed had, to his own satisfaction, been rigorously constructed from a repeated testing of reality (characteristic of inductionism) which had not anticipated results by the formulation of anterior hypotheses.

As we shall observe (see Section IV), Mao's view of Marxism in the period after 1955 was, in all major respects, that of the Yan'an period. It would be justifiable, therefore, because of this relationship between his scientific views and his interpretation of Marxism, to assume that his ideas on scientific method after 1955 also retained a consistency with his views of the Yan'an period. When we turn to an examination of the texts, this is in fact what is disclosed. The persistence of Mao's faith in "inductionism" emerges most clearly in his Reading Notes, in which on several occasions, Mao raised objections to the deductive form of methodology and exposition employed by the Soviet Manual. In a section entitled "Starting from Fundamental

Principles and Rules is not the Marxist Method", Mao attacked this anticipatory methodology:

But the text does not pursue an analysis. Its composition lacks order. It always proceeds from rules, principles, laws, definitions, a methodology Marxism-Leninism has always opposed. The results (*jieguo*) of tenets (*yuanli*) and principles can be obtained only through analysis and research. Man's understanding invariably comes in contact with appearance first and starting from appearance, picks out the principles and tenets. The text does the opposite. The method it uses is not the method of analysis, but the deductive method (*yanyifa*). Formal logic would say, "All men must die. Zhang San is a man. Therefore, Zhang San must die". This is the conclusion to be drawn from the major premise that all men must die. This is the deductive method. In regard to every problem, the textbook always gives a definition first and then makes this definition serve as a major premise for its reasoning, failing to understand that the major premise should be the result of studying a problem. Not until one has gone through the concrete research can principles and laws be discovered and verified".³²⁷

The Soviet Manual's insistence on the employment of a deductive methodology obviously incensed Mao, for he returned to another lengthy and acerbic attack on it later in the Reading Notes; "Quite without foundation", Mao alleged, "the book offers a series of laws, laws which are not discovered and verified through analysis of concrete historical development. Laws cannot be self-explanatory. If one does not work from concrete analysis of the process of historical development, laws will not be clearly explained".³²⁸ This clear rejection of a deductive methodology was also mirrored in Mao's insistence throughout this period on "seeking truth from facts"

327. Wansui (1960), p. 353; Wansui (1967), pp. 201-2; COSE, pp. 73-4; Miscellany II, pp. 274-5.

328. Wansui (1969), p. 383; Wansui (1967), p. 231; COSE, p. 108; Miscellany II, p. 300.

(*shishi qiu shi*), a slogan which appeared in the texts of the post-1955 period as frequently as it had during Yan'an days;³²⁹ and linked to this "inductionist" refrain, was the continued belief that if one did not engage in investigation, one had no right to speak.³³⁰

One of the problems associated with Mao's rather idiosyncratic inductionism was, during the Yan'an period, that of "repeatability". That is, in terms of orthodox inductionist theory, any further instance of the category under investigation ought to repeat exactly the behaviour of the phenomenon as it had been observed on the numerous instances prior to the law or generalization presenting itself as an obvious conclusion; Mao's admonition, however, that each particular instance (because of possible specific characteristics or regularities unique to that instance) might be distinct from other related instances within its category, meant that he could not (as orthodox inductionism demanded) confer an equality of extrapolative value on any conclusion except those at the most abstract level. It was observed that Mao got round this dilemma (rather than resolving it) by attributing most of the specific "laws" he identified with very little extrapolative value, and by qualifying the concept of "law" at an abstract level which had extrapolative value, with such prefixes as "general" or "universal". It is clear that Mao continued after 1955 to employ

329. SW V, pp. 372, 443, 471, 474; XJ V, pp. 352, 426, 454, 457; also Miscellany I, pp. 126, 144; Wansui (1969), pp. 246, 264; also Miscellany I, pp. 179, 231; Wansui (1967), pp. 59, 253; also Miscellany II, p. 242; Wansui (1967), p. 263; also Wansui (1969), pp. 450, 452. Mao is now accused of having failed to follow his own injunction to "seek truth from facts" during the period 1955-64, and that this led to serious errors in policy formulation. While this may or may not be the case, the textual evidence indicates that Mao continued to espouse a scientific procedure which was based on "seeking truth from facts".

330. See, for example, SW V, p. 478; XJ V, p. 460.

the concept of "law" (*guilü*) in this rather distinct sense; both as a means to describe those regularities characterizing a particular instance of a category (to which he attributed no necessary extrapolative value), and as a means of describing the behaviour of a category generally. Perhaps the most revealing example of this approach to "law" formulation appears in Mao's Reading Notes:

Studying the different societies means having to find the particular laws (*teshu guilü*) governing those societies. Once the particular laws have been studied and made clear, it will be easy to know the universal laws (*pubian guilü*) of society. It is necessary to discern the general from the study of many particularities. If the particular laws are not understood clearly, the general cannot be either.³³¹

In this most revealing passage, Mao gives further evidence of his belief in an inductionist methodology (working from the particular to the general), while at the same time allowing for the formulation of "laws" covering the behaviour of phenomena in particular instances, and not having, at that level, any necessary extrapolative value. It is clear that Mao continued to perceive the concept of "law" in this unusual fashion, utilizing the term to describe regularities at the level of the particular, at which there could be no opportunity for verification through a genuine repetition. To allow for extrapolation, Mao found himself obliged to create a hierarchy of abstraction, and allowing only the most general or universal of laws the status normally attributed within orthodox inductionism to the concept of "law". However, even these latter were limited by Mao's insistence that such laws, by virtue of their abstract character,

331: COSE, p. 114; Miscellany II, p. 304; Wansui (1967), p. 236; Wansui (1969), p. 388.

could merely direct attention to a particular phenomenon, and not insist on the manner that such a phenomenon might become manifest within a particular historical context. During the Yan'an period, Mao had regarded the law of class and class struggle as one such universal and abstract axiom describing the behaviour of society; yet, he had insisted that such a universal law could not specify the form that class struggle might assume in a particular and concrete context. The function of such a law (being itself the outcome of an inductionist process) was to indicate the phenomenon requiring attention, this then being the object of a further "inductionist" investigation to reveal its specific regularities within a given context. It was, it appears, the employment of these abstract "laws" guiding analysis of the particular, which separated, in Mao's mind, his own analysis from pure "empiricism".

Let us look very briefly here at a few examples of the very many "laws" referred to by Mao after 1955. Firstly, at the level of the very abstract, and most universal in its application, was the law of the "unity of opposites"; "Marxist philosophy holds", he declared in February 1957, "that the law of the unity of opposites is the fundamental law (*genben guilü*) of the universe. This law operates universally, whether in the natural world, in human society, or in man's thinking".³³² From Mao's numerous references to this "law",³³³

332. SW V, p. 392; XJ V, p. 372.

333. SW V, pp. 290, 297, 339, 366, 368, 370-1, 382-3, 392, 396, 433, 440, 514, 516; XJ V, pp. 273, 279, 319-20, 346, 347, 350-1, 361-2, 372, 376, 416, 423, 496, 498; also MTU, pp. 104, 106-8, 110, 113; Wansui (1969), pp. 165-6, 167-8, 169-70, 172; also Miscellany I, pp. 81, 98-9, 104, 114, 133, 143, 144; Wansui (1969), pp. 150, 195-6, 203, 215, 252, 263; also MP, p. 65; Wansui (suppt.), p. 33; also SW IV, p. 98 (fn); XJ IV, p. 1088 (fn); also Miscellany I, pp. 201, 204; Wansui (1967), pp. 123, 126; also COSE, p. 95; Miscellany II, p. 290; Wansui (1967), p. 220; Wansui (1969), p. 371; also Miscellany II, pp. 320, 358; Wansui (1969), pp. 443, 502; also MTU, pp. 226, 228; Miscellany II, pp. 393, 394; Wansui (1969), pp. 558, 559.

it is evident that he employed it widely to direct his own investigation of reality, and that, because of its very abstract formulation, his belief in it was continually reaffirmed and reinforced. From the level of the atom,³³⁴ through class struggle within socialist society,³³⁵ to the wider international arena,³³⁶ and to the universe beyond,³³⁷ everything was constituted, to Mao's mind, of a unity of opposites; "In short, unity of opposites exist everywhere".³³⁸ Consequently, his supposedly "inductionist" investigations of the behaviour of society more often than not set out to examine how the unity of opposites operated in the specific phenomenon within a particular situation. Other abstract or universally-valid laws utilized by Mao in his study of society and history included the pervasiveness of class struggle and social revolution,³³⁹ the violent nature of the transition from capitalism to socialism,³⁴⁰ and the necessary progression of society through certain stages³⁴¹ and through a certain pattern of development,³⁴² this latter including the "universal law" that broad development of the forces of production was necessarily subsequent to changes in society's relations of production.³⁴³ It can be seen from this selective list,³⁴⁴ that each law makes an assertion regarding

334. SW V, p. 516; XJ V, p. 498.

335. SW V, pp. 382-3; XJ V, p. 362.

336. Ibid.

337. SW V, p. 392; XJ V, p. 372.

338. Miscellany II, p. 405; Wansui (1969), p. 548.

339. MTTU, p. 84; WYLXSLWS, p. 6; also LLL, pp. 34-5.

340. PRKR, p. 47; also MDOCC, p. 252; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 11.

341. LLL, pp. 34-5; also MDOCC, p. 241; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 7.

342. NCNA 1717 (31 December) 1956, Suppt. 250, p. 7.

343. COSE, p. 93; Miscellany II, p. 289; Wansui (1967), p. 218; Wansui (1969), p. 370.

344. For references to other general or universal laws, see Miscellany I, pp. 92, 110, 112; Wansui (1969), pp. 188, 210, 213; also MP, p. 66; Wansui (suppt.), p. 33; also COSE, pp. 66, 81-2; Miscellany II, pp. 269, 279-80; Wansui (1967), pp. 195, 208-9; Wansui (1969), pp. 347, 359-60; also USW, pp. 410, 418; also PR No. 37 (13 September) 1963, p. 21.

the behaviour of society, but does not insist at this level, on any particular formulation by which it must necessarily manifest itself concretely. That function appears to have been reserved for "laws" describing the behaviour of phenomena at the level of the particular, such as the Chinese revolution or Chinese society. In his 7,000 cadres speech of January 1962, Mao discussed the process through which he and his colleagues had come to understand the specific "laws" of the Chinese revolution, and indicated that the particular case of China's socialist construction was also governed by its own "laws":

In giving a historical account of how we Chinese Communists got to know, with much difficulty and yet successfully, the laws governing the Chinese revolution in the period of democratic revolution, I hope to guide comrades to understand one thing: that getting to know the laws governing the building of socialism involves a process.

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Similarly, in the redacted version of his A Talk to Music Workers (1956), Mao argued that, while conforming to the "fundamental principles" of art which were "universal", each branch of Chinese art and culture had its own particular "law"; "To say that things Chinese do not have their own laws is to negate them, and this is wrong. The Chinese language, Chinese music and Chinese painting all have their own laws".³⁴⁶ Both of these sources indicate that Mao persisted in his belief that particular instances of a universal or general phenomenon were characterized by their own regularities which, while conforming in essential details to norms universal to the category to

345. TEWC, p. 18; ZKDDZY, pp. 18-19; MTTU, p. 172; Wansui (1969), p. 410; see also COSE, p. 117; Miscellany II, p. 306; Wansui (1967), p. 239; Wansui (1969), p. 391, where Mao refers to the "laws of the old society".

346. PR No. 37 (14 September) 1979, p. 9.

which it belonged,³⁴⁷ might possibly set them apart from other instances within the category characterized by such norms. A "law" which described such regularities at the level of the specific instance could therefore be presumed, firstly, to have no necessary extrapolative value, and secondly, not to be necessarily "repeatable" even within a particular context due to the development and possible alteration of the contingent regularities.

It is obvious that this distinct process of "law" formulation in Mao's approach to the investigation of phenomena, set him somewhat at odds with orthodox inductionism, although it is probable that he did not perceive the incongruence. The question at issue here, however, is not whether Mao's scientific methodology (that is, his interpretation of the inductive method) was or was not "correct", but how this interpretation influenced his approach to Marxism, and to the study of history and historical development. It would appear, in fact, that it played a most significant function, for it provided Mao with a theoretical foundation which informed his view that Marxism as a body of abstract universal laws was incomplete if not amalgamated with the specific "laws" disclosed by the application of those universal laws in a particular and concrete context. The universal laws of Marxism

347. The constraints of the universal on the particular are clearly expressed in a passage from the Twenty Five Points of 1963; "The revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and the people in various countries go through different stages and they all have their own characteristics, but they will not transcend the general law of development of world history...". MDOCC, p. 241; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 7.

provided the (inductively-derived) framework³⁴⁸ which prevented Mao's propensity to "investigation and study" from degenerating into empiricism; they did not, however, constrain Mao by dictating the manner which described phenomena would assume concrete form. Consequently, this theoretical position provided him with a freedom of action in interpreting the regularities of the particular, while preventing him from an apostasy resulting from an infringement of Marxism's central truths. Likewise, in approaching the interpretation of history, Mao was inclined to perceive in analysis of particular contexts or developments, verification in specific form of laws deemed universally valid. There is no doubt that Mao regarded world history as pursuing a particular pattern or sequence in developmental terms;³⁴⁹ yet, while all nations would pursue that same fundamental course of development, each would do so in a manner dictated by those regularities or specific "laws" which characterized it and it alone. Subsequently, by this rather convenient union of the universal and the particular, Mao was afforded a flexibility of historical interpretation which had the advantage of being clothed in the verisimilitude of scientific authority. For Mao's theoretical position enabled him to encompass a wide variation in historical contingency by

348. Mao's belief that this framework had been derived in accordance with inductive logic emerges clearly in the following quote from his Reading Notes:

Laws are things which appear over and over, not accidentally, in the movement of things. It is only after the repeated appearance of something that it becomes a law and thus an object to be understood. For example, crises of capitalism occurred about every ten years. When this had happened over and over it then became possible for us to understand the laws of economic crisis in capitalist society. COSE, p. 113; Miscellany II, p. 303; Wansui (1967), p. 237; Wansui (1969), p. 387.

349. See MDOCC, p. 241; PR No. 25 (21 June) 1963, p. 7; also NCNA 1717 (31 December) 1956, Suppt. 250, p. 13.

invoking the inviolability of the particular to manifest the universal in varying and unique forms. As an historical method, it would appear indeed to be virtually unassailable in terms of its own logic. For those not dazzled by its basic assumptions, however, it might appear a rather convenient intellectual construction excluding the possibility of a fundamental refutation.

IV. "Sinification of Marxism": The Union of Universal and Particular

During the Yan'an period, Mao had called for the "Sinification of Marxism" in order to create a complete ideology constituted of Marxism's universally valid abstractions conjoined by the application of a certain methodology with a description (specific "laws") of those regularities characterizing the Chinese historical context. Only by such a union could Marxism become a complete ideology, and through that completeness gain utility as an ideological guide to action within a national setting. Mao's notion of the "Sinification of Marxism", while insisting on this integration of the supra-cultural abstractions of Marxism with Chinese cultural specificities and regularities, denied that there could be any cultural prerogative over Marxism, and this precisely because the national or cultural integer within that complete ideology necessarily changed as the cultural and historical context changed. As a result, Sinified Marxism could not be assumed as applicable in a different historico-cultural setting, even though its central abstractions were not limited in this manner.

Mao's approach to Marxism after 1955 remained essentially that formulated during the Yan'an period, although in this later period

Mao found it politic to avoid categorizing it as "Sinified Marxism". His reasons for avoiding this categorization stemmed from a misinterpretation (whether deliberate or unintentional) on the part of his opponents within the international communist movement, who chose to regard the "Sinification of Marxism" as representing an assertion of Chinese cultural hegemony over Marxism's universally valid abstractions.³⁵⁰ With the emergence and development of the Sino-Soviet split, this misinterpretation of the "Sinification of Marxism" became a clout in the hands of Mao's enemies which they employed to attack his position on the Chinese road to socialism, and his refusal to defer to Khrushchov's policies of peaceful transition and peaceful coexistence. Mao indicated, at the Ninth Plenum of the Eight Central Committee (January 1961), that he was aware that the "Sinification of Marxism" was being used in this manner.³⁵¹ Consequently, although Mao's position on Marxism did not alter in concession to his critics, he was prepared to forego the title he had employed in Yan'an days, and this to underline that he was not attempting to establish any exclusively Chinese prerogative over Marxism.

His references to Marxism during the period 1955-1964 indicate

350. A good example of this misinterpretation appears in an article of 1963 by S.M. Dange, President of the Indian Communist Party:

It is well known that all world parties in their Party Constitutions abide by Marxism-Leninism. But the Chinese Party found it necessary to add something else to it, basing themselves on their own experience and the needs of their revolution... Why should we be asked to follow Chinese lessons of "thirty years before", which have no validity for us? (M & A, p. 316)

351. "They have upbraided us on five (*sic*) counts: paper tiger, "East wind prevails over the West wind", the longer Nehru is anti-China the better, and the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism". Miscellany II, p. 241; Wansui (1967), p. 262.

that Mao had remained convinced that Marxism's universal truths had to be united with Chinese realities in order for it to become a complete ideology and hence have any utility. For example, in his keynote speech of April 1956 entitled On the Ten Great Relationships, Mao reaffirmed that "the study of universal truth must be combined with Chinese reality. Our theory is made up of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism combined with the concrete reality of China";³⁵² similarly, later in that same year, Mao warned that "the universal truth of Marxism must be integrated with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution...".³⁵³ And indeed, there are numerous references of this nature during the period 1955-1964, all asserting the need for a union of the universal truths of Marxism with the particularities of the Chinese historical context.³⁵⁴

Moreover, as in the Yan'an period, Mao continued to believe that Marxism's universal abstractions had to be applied in a certain manner in order to disclose China's characterizing regularities and thus facilitate the integration of those abstractions with such regularities to create a complete ideology. Class analysis, which had been asserted by Mao to constitute "the fundamental viewpoint of Marxism", continued to represent a central feature of this application procedure; "If one does not discuss history from the point of view of class struggle", Mao asserted in August 1964, "his analysis will be muddled (*jiang bu qingchu*). It is only by using class analysis that

352. MTTU, p. 82; Wansui (1969), p. 58; cf. SW V, p. 304; XJ V, p. 286.

353. SW V, p. 316; XJ V, p. 297.

354. See, for example, SW V, p. 304; XJ V, p. 286; cf. MTTU, p. 82; Wansui (1969), p. 58; also SW V, p. 326; XJ V, pp. 307-8; also Miscellany I, pp. 40, 97; Wansui (1969), pp. 66, 193; also Miscellany I, p. 201; Wansui (1967), p. 123; also TEWC, p. 21; ZKDDZY, p. 21; MTTU, p. 175; Wansui (1969), p. 413; also MTTU, p. 195; Wansui (1969), p. 436; also MTTU, p. 129.

history can be analyzed clearly".³⁵⁵ Elsewhere, Mao stressed that a class viewpoint was essential in the analysis of problems,³⁵⁶ and moreover, that class analysis had to be carried out in "minute detail" for the characterizing regularities of class and property relations to be properly clarified.³⁵⁷ Mao also continued to believe that the application of Marxism's universal truths enjoined an appreciation of the totality or "all-sidedness" (*quanmianxing*) of an historical or sociological context; consequently, he still regarded a "one-sided" approach as a serious methodological impediment to gaining an accurate or complete assessment of all relevant regularities.³⁵⁸ Mao persisted as well in his belief that an understanding of present realities was not possible without a sensitivity to the historical emergence and development of those realities; "Problems must be viewed historically", he asserted in 1959,³⁵⁹ for a phenomenon developed through a process in which its present condition was a function, not only of present related contingencies, but of the emergence and development of that phenomenon through time; "Things (economics, politics, ideology (*sixiang*), culture, military affairs, parties, and so on) always make progress and develop through a process".³⁶⁰ In order to make a correct analysis of any historical phenomenon, an historical consciousness was therefore necessary which was sensitive to the cumulative effect and impact of the process through which such a phenomenon had

355. Wansui (1969), p. 556; Miscellany II, p. 392; MTU, pp. 223-4.

356. Miscellany II, p. 321; Wansui (1969), pp. 443-4.

357. Miscellany I, p. 122; Wansui (1969), p. 224; also MTU, p. 219; Miscellany II, p. 389; Wansui (1969), p. 553.

358. See SW V, pp. 416, 430; XJ V, pp. 397, 413; also USW, p. 166; Miscellany I, p. 69; Wansui (1969), p. 106; also Miscellany I, p. 139; Wansui (1969), p. 258.

359. Miscellany I, p. 180; Wansui (1967), p. 61.

360. Wansui (1969), p. 447.

previously developed. While the analysis of the present dictated a sensitivity to the past, likewise the study of past history had to be made from the temporal vantage point which was the present; an appreciation of a past phenomenon could thus not be divorced from the manner in which it had continued to develop past the temporal point of inquiry, both in terms of its own development and in terms of the historiographical devices available to the observer of the present. Mao was to point this out in his conversation with his nephew Mao Yuanxin in July 1964:

When you study history, if you don't combine it with present reality it's no good (*bu xing*). If you study modern history and don't carry out work compiling village histories and family histories, it's a complete waste of time. When you study ancient history, this too must be combined with present reality, and cannot be divorced from excavations and archaeology. Did Yao, Shun, and Yü exist or not? I don't believe it, you don't have any real evidence. There are oracle-bones to provide evidence regarding the Shang dynasty, we can believe in that.

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It would appear that Mao continued to advocate the employment of the same application procedures (class analysis, "totality", and historical consciousness) as he had during the Yan'an period. His views on the "Sinification of Marxism" and these procedures had been detailed most comprehensively in the important 1938 document entitled On the New Stage. The most important statement of his views on these subjects in the post-1955 period appears in his A Talk to Music Workers of August 1956.³⁶² In this document, Mao returned to the point made in On the New Stage, that China, as a particular instance of historical development, manifested universal laws of development in

361. MTU, p. 249; Wansui (1969), p. 471.

362. For the original version of this document see MTU, pp. 84-90; WYLXSLWS, pp. 6-9; for the official (and somewhat revised) version of this talk published some twenty-three years after its delivery, see PR No. 37 (14 September) 1979, pp. 9-15.

its own specific way. He likened this propensity for variation in the particular manifestations of universal laws to the leaves of a tree; "This is a natural law. All things are like this, no matter whether they belong to nature, society, or to the realm of the intellect (*sixiangjie*). Take the leaves of a tree; at first sight they all look much the same, but when you examine them closely, each one is different; to find two absolutely identical leaves is impossible".³⁶³ In a speech at the Ninth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee (1961), Mao was to apply this "tree" analogy directly to Marxism, and once again his purpose was to indicate that the assertion of universal laws could not presume how such laws might be made manifest in any particular historical context:

Marxism-Leninism is basically one (*genben yiyang*) with different twigs and leaves, like a single tree that has many twigs and leaves. Circumstances vary in different countries. In the past we suffered from having paid attention to universal truths without paying attention to investigation and study.

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Consequently, the universal truths of Marxism had application in so far as they provided indisputable axioms regarding social function and historical development, and in so far as they suggested a procedure whereby those axioms might be applied in a particular instance to permit "investigation and study" of such axiomatic phenomena within a particular national or historical context. The regularities thus disclosed, while giving further witness to the universality of such phenomena, were unlikely to be exactly equivalent to the regularities disclosed in a further context, and could thus

363. MTU, p. 84; WYLXSLWS, p. 6.

364. Miscellany II, p. 241; Wansui (1967), p. 262.

be categorized as characterizing regularities serving as a guide to action only within that particular setting. In his A Talk to Music Workers, Mao claimed that it was precisely because this formula had been adhered to, that the Chinese revolution had been victorious:

Marxism is a universal truth which can be applied everywhere. We must accept it. But this universal truth must be combined with the concrete practice of each nation's revolution. It was only because the Chinese people accepted Marxism and combined it with the practice of the Chinese revolution that they won victory in the Chinese revolution.

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Similarly, because the Chinese case was and would remain a particular historical instance different from all other instances, it was necessary to retain a sensitivity to China's long historical heritage, such that present regularities could be viewed historically, as an instance in the process of emergence and development of those particular phenomena. In a passage which could have been lifted straight from On the New Stage, Mao stressed the importance of this historical sensitivity by reiterating "It won't do to sever (*geduan*) history, or abandon our heritage".³⁶⁶

In asserting the Chinese example to be a particular manifestation of universally-valid laws, Mao was once again, both implicitly and explicitly, declaring that Chinese Marxism, as a complete ideological system, could not be assumed (despite its success within the Chinese context) as having a necessary relevance in any other historical context; implicitly, in that Mao's whole approach to Marxism argued against a mechanical application of a Marxism found relevant in another

365. MTTU, p. 86; WYLXSLWS, p. 7.

366. MTTU, p. 85; WYLXSLWS, p. 6.

cultural or national context; and explicitly, in his repeated assertions that Chinese Marxism, while incorporating useful experience valid for comparison and instruction, could not be transplanted into a foreign context as though it (as complete ideology) constituted a body of universal truths unconstrained by cultural or national particularities. This admonition emerged most clearly in a discussion with representatives of Latin American Communist Parties in September 1956; rather than asserting the experience of the Chinese revolution (because of its evident success) to now represent a theory for universal application, Mao reiterated that such experience could not be presumed (because of the differing regularities defining each national context) to have any necessary utility in another historical setting:

The experience of the Chinese revolution, that is, building rural base areas, encircling the cities from the countryside and finally seizing the cities, may not be wholly applicable to many of your countries, though it can serve for your reference. I beg to advise you not to transplant Chinese experience mechanically. The experience of any foreign country can serve only for reference and must not be regarded as dogma. The universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and the concrete conditions of your own countries--the two must be integrated.

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The same theme emerged, in December of that year, with the publication of the second editorial on the dictatorship of the proletariat. "In the course of revolution and construction in different countries", the editorial declared, "there are, besides aspects common to all, aspects which are different. In this sense, each country has its own specific path of development".³⁶⁸ Later in the same editorial, this theme was returned to with renewed vigour,

367. SW V, p. 326; XJ V, pp. 307-8.

368. NCNA 1717 (31 December) 1956, Suppt. 250, p. 5.

and this in order to demonstrate that China's revolution and historical development were dictated by its own identifying characteristics, the existence of those particular characteristics being a further demonstration of the validity of Marxism's universal truths, rather than the converse:

Marxism-Leninism holds that there are common, basic laws in the development of human society, but each state and nation has features different from those of others. Thus all nations pass through the class struggle, and will eventually arrive at communism, by roads that are the same in essence but different in their specific forms...Doctrinaires do not understand that the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism manifests itself concretely and becomes operative in real life only through the medium of specific national characteristics...³⁶⁹

Moreover, it is evident that this view remained Mao's basic position on Marxism throughout this period. At the Chengdu Conference (1958), he asserted that "our basic line is universal truth, but details differ. This applies to each country and to each province";³⁷⁰ and in a speech at a conference of provincial and municipal party secretaries in February 1959, Mao reiterated that "objective law is reflected differently in the various nations as a result of different historical conditions".³⁷¹

This position, while appearing to have gained sanction from the more flexible approach formulated at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in 1956,³⁷² actually was to bring Mao into conflict with the Soviet Party and its supporters within the international communist

369. Ibid., p. 13.

370. MTTU, p. 103; Wansui (1969), p. 165.

371. Miscellany I, p. 156; Wansui (1969), p. 277.

372. See especially M & A, pp. 282-7.

movement. For while Khrushchov was prepared to concede alternate roads to socialism, he was also prepared to accept that those roads might include a peaceful transition of capitalist into socialist societies. This, as we have seen, Mao was not prepared to brook. The revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism (along with its antecedent class struggle) remained for Mao one of the truths at the centre of abstract Marxism which was not capable of revision.³⁷³ In his Reading Notes, Mao emphasized that the revision of this universal truth constituted the central feature of his feud with the Soviet leadership; "This is our main difference with the revisionists, who... argue that capitalism may peacefully grow over to socialism. This is a serious distortion of Marxism".³⁷⁴ While the transition from capitalism to socialism would doubtless adopt numerous different manifestations, its basic form was that of revolution, and to assert otherwise was to ignore the fact that the laws of historical development, while making allowance for such individual manifestation, did not extend to a distortion of the fundamental phenomena which those laws described. An instructive passage from the Twenty Five Points of 1963 demonstrates that there was, for Mao, no contradiction in asserting the universal validity of Marxism's assertion of a revolutionary transition and his insistence that the actual form that such a transition would adopt was dependent on the specific features of each individual nation:

The general line of the international Communist movement should reflect the general law of development of world history. The revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and the people in

373. MTTU, p. 85; WYLXSLWS, p. 6; also LLL, pp. 34-5.

374. COSE, pp. 33-4; Miscellany II, p. 247; Wansui (1969), p. 320.

various countries go through different stages and they all have their own characteristics, but they will not transcend the general law of development of world history...While working out its specific line and policies, it is most important for each Communist or Workers' Party to adhere to the principle of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of revolution and construction in its own country.

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Thus, from Mao's point of view, Khrushchov was distorting and revising those truths of Marxism which were universal in their application and which constituted the essence of abstract Marxism; as seen from Khrushchov's point of view, however, Mao's insistence on those universal truths smacked of a dogmatism which refused to adapt ideology to changed circumstances. Yet, Mao's position was dogmatic only in so far as it insisted on the inviolability of abstract Marxism's universally applicable truths (as he defined them); in insisting that such truths be integrated with those regularities characterizing a particular historical context, Mao was indicating that flexibility and adaptation of ideology came not in revising its central verities, but in the manner in which it was applied in a particular national context. As the regularities defining a situation changed, so did the national or cultural integer of the equation which constituted the complete ideology. Thus, while the complete ideology might alter because of changes in specific features of a particular historical situation, it was not the universal laws which prompted an appreciation of those particularities which changed; rather, while those universal laws remained constant, the national or cultural aspect of the complete ideology was susceptible to, and indeed would probably require, constant revision to accommodate changes in the regularities

defining its historical environment. Mao could therefore reject criticisms of "dogmatism" by indicating this flexibility, while avoiding charges of "revisionism" by maintaining an adherence to certain truths of abstract Marxism deemed beyond revision because the phenomena described by such universal laws were not susceptible to qualitative alteration by human intervention. While such a position might seem a case of having one's (ideological) cake and eating it too, there is no doubt that Mao firmly believed in this theoretical position, and did not cynically manufacture or employ it merely to serve him in his struggle with those, both domestically and internationally, with whom he was at odds.

If Mao's concept of Marxism as a complete ideology included those regularities which defined a particular national context, it would appear that a description of such regularities could not limit itself at "objective" characteristics, and ignore the "subjective" regularities which constituted an important ingredient in the definition of that context's "culture"; and, it would appear that Mao did not so limit his view of what was necessarily incorporated in the complete ideology that was Marxism in a national context. Mao obviously believed that modes of thought characteristically "Chinese", that is, the "subjective" regularities of China as an historical instance, could not be ignored if abstract Marxism were to be successfully and fully integrated with the concrete experience of Chinese culture and society. Marxism's universal truths had to be applied in a national context, otherwise they were of no utility; the regularities of a national context also included the regularities of thought which constituted an important ingredient of that context. A Russian, for example, necessarily approached the integration of Marxism's universal

abstractions from a perspective which could not but draw on aspects of his cultural and intellectual tradition, and Mao was aware that the Russian cultural perspective differed from that of the Chinese; "the way they (the Russians) think, the way they do things and their traditional habits are different from ours".³⁷⁶ Consequently, Russian Marxism (as Mao would have defined it) had to incorporate those cultural elements, being as they were, regularities distinctive to the Russian context. Likewise, a Chinese had to approach acultural abstractions from a cultural perspective; he could do no other. From Mao's point of view, to talk of Marxism *qua* complete ideology as though it could survive as an acultural view of reality would have been a nonsense; it had to be clothed with a national characteristic (including subjective regularities) to provide it cultural substance. It might be argued that the factor of an unavoidably cultural interpretation of Marxism's universal laws could not but culturally distort and thus impose some form of cultural prerogative over Marxism. However, the universal laws of Marxism referred to by Mao were invariably expressed in a simple fashion which appear to have had meaning and relevance to others in different cultures. It is quite evident that the controversy between Khrushchov and Mao was not over a difference in cultural perspective of Marxism's universal laws, but over a substantive disagreement about the universality of those laws. For example, Mao believed it to be a universally-valid law of Marxism that the transition from capitalism to socialism could only come about through violent revolution;³⁷⁷ Khrushchov did not, and the disagreement over the universality of this law was not simply a matter of cultural misunderstanding.

376. SW V, p. 364; XJ V, p. 344.

377. PRKR, p. 47.

Consequently, Mao perceived no cultural impediment to the integration of Marxism's universal laws with the regularities of Chinese society. Moreover, Chinese Marxism had to be identified as such by the integration of those universal laws with both objective and subjective regularities of Chinese society; to present Marxism as a culturally sterile assertion of universally valid truths somehow conjoined with only the "objective" regularities of the Chinese context would have left it incomplete and made its acceptance virtually impossible. The incorporation of those subjective regularities, the clothing of Marxism's abstractions in Chinese garb, and the illustration of its universality by recourse to well-known Chinese proverbs and homilies, were not therefore demonstration that Mao's "Chineseness" was detractive of his authenticity as a Marxist.³⁷⁸ On the contrary, by virtue of Mao's own definition of Marxism, only by taking into account all regularities (including the subjective) could a complete appreciation of the potentialities of the Chinese historical context be possible. Such subjective regularities included modes of thought typically Chinese; only by including some appreciation of such modes of thought could Marxism become complete in that context. Moreover, only by thoroughly imbuing the universalities of Marxism with a Chinese flavour by presenting it in a manner compatible with those modes of thought, could Marxism become meaningful and acceptable as a truly Chinese Marxism.

378. Schram has drawn attention to the language aspect of Mao's "Sinification of Marxism"; "Mao is an extremely skilful practitioner of this kind of Sinification, which undoubtedly has a favourable effect on Chinese readers"; PTMTT, p. 113. However, as Schram argues that Mao denied the existence of a "universally valid form of Marxism" (PTMTT, pp. 115-6), Mao's "Sinification of Marxism" at the level of "language" could only be interpreted by Schram as further proof of Mao's elevation of Chinese realities at the expense of Marxism.

Consequently, the bifurcation between Chinese and Marxist elements sometimes perceived in Mao's thought is, by token of this interpretation, somewhat misleading.³⁷⁹ To juxtapose the Chinese against the Marxist elements of Mao's thought as though they were mutually exclusive is to miss the point that it was only because Mao had the intellectual stature and perspicacity to combine and integrate the abstractions of Marxism with elements of Chinese culture and its intellectual heritage, that he could produce (by his own reckoning) a valid Chinese Marxism capable to guiding practice and gaining acceptance. In other words, it was precisely because of Mao's "Chineseness" that he could formulate a Chinese Marxism which incorporated all the regularities necessary to produce a Marxism which was a complete ideology in that particular cultural and national context. This is not to say, of course, that Mao was uncritical in the manner in which he employed the Chinese tradition to permit this integration. In fact, Mao eclectically employed and adopted those elements of the Chinese tradition which appeared to him as compatible with and reinforcing to (and not in contradiction with) those features of Marxism he deemed essential. Thus, if Mao utilized time-worn homilies, proverbs and illustrative material from the Chinese tradition and its classics, this did not betoken a cultural atavism, but rather a need to demonstrate (in Chinese terms) the veracity and utility of some point, either of Marxism or compatible with it. So, for example, if Mao employed in articles of theoretical import well-known homilies by Ban Gu and Lao Zi, which could in isolation be taken as evidence of an inclination towards Daoist dialectics, his recourse to such traditional verities was perceived by Mao as a means of

379. See, for example, PTMTT, p. 114.

persuading acceptance by Chinese of the dialectic in the Marxist view of the world, rather than as a means of introducing subtle cultural qualifications which would transmogrify the universalities of Marxism; in context, it is obviously Mao's intention to utilize them as such a reinforcement to Marxism.³⁸⁰ By illustrating Marxism's truths in a style familiar to a Chinese audience, Mao was increasing the credibility of those truths and the fact of their universality, and by so doing, facilitating the integration of the universal and particular, rather than elevating the Chinese tradition at the expense of abstract Marxism.

Similarly, Mao also indicated (as he had during Yan'an days) that Chinese history had to be scrutinized from a certain standpoint from which to evaluate a long history recorded for posterity largely by and for a certain class within Chinese society. Mao's scorn for the view of history *qua* the action of heroes is a case in point; a good deal of traditional historiography (witness the style of the Shi Ji) had presented history from the perspective of the role of individual leader or heroes in creating or turning the tide of history through the performance of meritorious or daring deeds. While Mao may have admired the courage, tenacity and wit of such traditional historical or folklore heroes, he would not have entertained the view that history could be explained by reference to the actions of such heroes; not only could the hero not autonomously create all the conditions necessary for his success, the pattern of historical development could only (at most) be marginally influenced by the daring-do of such meritorious individuals. As Mao was to point out in a talk of December 1963,

380. See, for example, Mao's employment of Lao Zi's homily (from Chapter 58 of the Dao De Jing) at SW V, p. 416; also Ban Gu's maxim at SW I, p. 343.

"The history of materialists shows that the history of the development of society is not the history of individual heroes, but the history of the labouring masses".³⁸¹ Here again, Mao's references to the heroes of Chinese tradition (such as Zhao Zilong, Zhang Fei or Zhu-ge Liang from the San Guo, or Song Jiang from the Shui Hu Zhuan) had the function of historical illustration, and should not be interpreted as constituting any concession to an "heroic view" of history in the Chinese vein.³⁸²

In fact, Mao made it quite clear that he regarded a good deal of the Chinese intellectual heritage and tradition as so much dross to be discarded; "Socialism is infinitely superior to the Confucian "classics", "Mao had remarked late in 1955,³⁸³ and in the following year he had likened the "twaddle" (*dongxi*) of Confucius and Lao Zi to "the false, the ugly and the hostile".³⁸⁴ Nevertheless, he was prepared to evaluate the Chinese tradition critically, utilizing those aspects which he believed were not incompatible with his interpretation of Marxism's universally applicable axioms. Indeed, the whole thrust of his A Talk to Music Workers was concerned (as had been

381. Wansui (1969), p. 449; see also Ssu-ch'ing, p. 69.

382. For example, in trying to get across the point that in economic construction detailed analysis was necessary, Mao declared in May 1958; "In regard to "generalization without detail", Zhang Fei gave attention to the details even though he dealt in generalizations. We want to be Zhang Fei and give attention to details". Miscellany I, p. 102; Wansui (1969), p. 201. It is possibly no coincidence that Peng Dehuai referred to himself as Zhang Fei in his "Letter of Opinion" of 14 July 1959, the implication being that, while Zhang Fei was a "rash fellow", he also "gave attention to details", something Peng believed the Chairman had failed to do in his handling of the Great Leap Forward; see Current Background, No. 851, pp. 18-19; see also MTTU, pp. 145, 319; Wansui (1969), p. 304.

383. SW V, p. 273; XJ V, p. 257.

384. SW V, p. 366; XJ V, p. 346.

his speech of November 1938) with this need to extricate from China's culture and intellectual heritage, that which was progressive and of utility, and to discard that which was not.³⁸⁵ Such eclecticism was, from the point of view of Mao's notion of Marxism, eminently logical, and not betokening either a desire to elevate elements of the Chinese culture and intellectual heritage at the expense of Marxism's universal truths, or to assert a cultural prerogative over Marxism as an ideology. The employment of such historical illustration utilizing well-known characters or maxims from Chinese historical and proverbial tradition was, therefore, for Mao, one means of integrating the universalities of Marxism with the realities (both objective and subjective) of the Chinese historical context; for by adding local colour to his interpretations of Marxism's universalities, Mao was resorting to a pedagogically astute means of increasing the receptivity of his audience to an acceptance of Marxism's abstractions, and by so doing, underlining the fact that subjective as well as objective regularities had to be incorporated in any conjunction of abstract Marxism with the regularities of the Chinese situation to produce a truly Chinese Marxism. Without the inclusion of such subjective regularities, the equation constituting the totality of Chinese Marxism could not be complete.

While Mao's position on the 'Sinification of Marxism' as interpreted above remained reasonably constant throughout the post-cooperativization

385 Mao had expressed similar sentiments with regard to the selective use of traditional Chinese medicine. See his Directive on Work in Traditional Chinese Medicine (July 1954), Wansui (1969), pp. 10-12; Miscellany I, pp. 12-13; also "Comments on a 'Summing-up Report of the Party Organization of the Ministry of Health Concerning Western Doctors Who Leave Their Posts to Study Chinese Medicine'". (October 1958), in SCMM, Suppt. 22 (8 April) 1968, pp. 1-17.

period, there is some evidence to suggest that in the final years of this period there was a growing tendency to emphasize the positive attributes of the Chinese tradition and that this may have been accompanied by some lessening of his regard for Marxism as a universal theory of history. In talks in February and August 1964, Mao emphasized that the Chinese tradition had much to offer. In his "Remarks at the Spring Festival" of February 1964, Mao criticised the type of education system which was evolving in China, and spoke positively of the tradition in education established by Confucius of keeping close to the masses and avoiding formal and dogmatic book learning; "We must not cast aside the tradition of Confucius", Mao urged.³⁸⁶ Similarly, in his "Talk on Questions of Philosophy" of August 1964, Mao referred to Confucius as being "rather democratic",³⁸⁷ and suggested that both Buddhism and Daoism should be included in analysis of Chinese philosophy.³⁸⁸ In the same talk, Mao was to reject one of the three basic categories of Marxist philosophy, the negation of the negation,³⁸⁹ and it has been suggested by Stuart Schram³⁹⁰ that this is evidence of Mao's growing affinity with the traditional Chinese view of history as flux and reflux characteristic of the dialectic within Daoism. By December 1965, Mao's position appeared to have moved further in this direction, and he suggested in his speech at Hangzhou that the only aspect of Western learning which should be used in China was Western technology. Other aspects of Western learning should not be adopted as the 'substance' (ti).³⁹¹ This position, evocative of the conservative reformers of the Tongzhi Restoration period, indicates the possibility of borrowing the purely technical features of Western learning without

386. MTTU, p. 208.

387. MTTU, p. 215.

388. MTTU, pp. 229-30.

389. MTTU, p. 226.

390. MTTU, p. 26.

391. MTTU, pp. 234-5.

utilizing Western cultural values. From this position, Marxism, as a product of the Western intellectual tradition, could not but be treated with caution, and utilized only in a manner which would serve China's interests and not serve to weaken or belittle China's rich cultural heritage.

This apparent movement in Mao's thought towards an emphasis on the importance of the Chinese tradition probably has its roots in both the Sino-Soviet split and the loss of direction of the Chinese revolution in the wake of the Great Leap Forward. In this turbulent and seemingly rudderless time, Mao may have sought stability on the rock of the Chinese tradition which, with its longevity and cultural depth, may have appeared to provide a compass for the future.

We will have cause to note in the next chapter that there was a significant movement in Mao's position on the 'Sinification of Marxism' during the Cultural Revolution, for he was prepared to concede that the Chinese element of Sinified Marxism could transcend its cultural and historical constraints to provide lessons for other societies. This movement towards a promotion of the Chinese experience to a degree of universality may have had its roots in Mao's emphasis on the Chinese tradition towards the end of the post-cooperativization period (1955-64), and been linked to his declining optimism that communism, Marxism's historical goal, could ever be realized in China.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Cultural Revolution: 1965-69

"Those who now make a lot of noise are not likely to be mentioned in history as men of consequence".¹

Coming as it did towards the end of Mao Zedong's political and intellectual career, the Cultural Revolution came to constitute for many in the West the quintessence of the Maoist style in politics. The frenetic and often violent activities of the Red Guards were perceived as the final consummation of a political ethic which asserted both the pervasiveness and persistence of struggle and contradiction within society, be that society capitalist, socialist or communist. Implicit in this perception were several assumptions which contributed to something of a distorted interpretation of Mao's own role in the Cultural Revolution, and of his political and intellectual career in general. In the first of these, the activities of the Red Guards and the course the Cultural Revolution followed were regarded as somehow reducible (in terms of explanation) to the premeditated thoughts and aspirations of Mao himself; that is, that Mao was the principal architect and strategist of a prolonged spasm of political disorder from which he would emerge the prime beneficiary. This notion that Mao had not only anticipated the course of the Cultural Revolution, but was its sole locus of generation, has been dissipated to a certain extent as a result of the revelations contained in the material of the Wansui collections. The picture that emerges from the "unrehearsed" documents of the Cultural Revolution is in fact one of a

1. Miscellany II, p. 467; Wansui (1969), p. 485.

leader somewhat bemused at the unanticipated consequences of his own actions. For example, in a talk to a Report Meeting of 24 October 1966, Mao commented

One big-character poster, the Red Guards, the great exchange of revolutionary experience, and nobody--not even I--expected that all the provinces and cities would be thrown into confusion. The students also made some mistakes, but the mistakes were mainly made by us big shots.²

He was to voice a similar sentiment on the following day in a talk to a Central Work Conference; "I myself had not foreseen that as soon as the Peking University poster was broadcast, the whole country would be thrown into turmoil".³ Similarly, it emerges that, rather than closely directing this turmoil, Mao indicated a willingness (at least in its initial stages) to permit the chaos of the Cultural Revolution to develop largely unhindered from excessive Central interference and direction; "In my opinion, we should let the chaos go on for a few months...Stop interfering for the time being", he asserted in August 1966.⁴ By permitting the chaos of the Cultural Revolution to proceed in this manner, the possible historically viable alternatives for future policy initiatives would make themselves manifest. Subsequently, Mao is often revealed in the texts of this period as responding to, rather than being the initiator of, the major developments which emerged from the chaos.⁵ Thus, while

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2. MTTU, p. 265; Wansui (1969), p. 654; see also MTTU, p. 268; Wansui (1969), p. 656.
 3. MTTU, p. 271; Wansui (1969), p. 658.
 4. MP, p. 35; Wansui (April 1967), p. 40.
 5. A good example of this is Mao's response to the developments in Shanghai; see especially Miscellany II, pp. 453-4; Wansui (1969), pp. 670-1.

Mao was obviously not a powerless bystander, the image of the omnipotent and prescient manipulator of history is not born out by his own testimony.

Secondly, the interpretation resulting from this former assumption has tended to be applied retrospectively to earlier periods in Mao's career, thus blurring important distinctions which did exist over time in the development of his intellect and his political style. This tendency to perceive the Cultural Revolution as representing something of a distillation of the essential features of Mao's political and intellectual style is rendered dubious not only by the mistaken assumption that the Cultural Revolution *qua* political phenomenon can find sufficient explanation by reference to Mao and his thought, but also by virtue of the teleological nature of this perception. Thus, there is no necessarily valid reason why the Mao of the Cultural Revolution should be regarded as a more definitive expression of the "essential" Mao than was the Mao of the Yan'an period; and moreover, there is no validity in the view that the career of the Yan'an Mao merely served as an historically necessary precursor to the Mao of the late 1960s, and can only be understood by reference to it. Such a view would permit the methodological indiscretion of attributing a greater or lesser degree of significance to elements of Mao's thought precisely because of their subsequent emphasis at a later period; such an analysis would be ahistorical in ignoring the very real influence of the contemporary historical scenario in the development of Mao's thought. It has been one of the central methodological assumptions of this essay that it is not possible to isolate such a supratemporal synthesis of Mao's thought, and that it is consequently necessary to pursue an analysis of that thought which is

historically located, anchored *in situ* by reference to the period in which that thought emerged.

Subsequently, in analyzing Mao's views on causation and time in the historical process during the Cultural Revolution, it is necessary to proceed with some caution in order to do justice to the historically-located nature of Mao's thought; while it is true that the Cultural Revolution cannot be simplistically represented as a manifestation of Mao's views writ large, a preordained extension of his will, it is important to remain cognizant of the practice of the Cultural Revolution to which he responded and within which his ideas emerged. In the brief treatment which follows, the analysis will concentrate as in previous sections on a close textual investigation of Mao's literary output of the years 1965-69, but attempting nevertheless to place that analysis against the backdrop of the political and social ferment which characterized those years. The brevity of the analysis is a function of two related factors; firstly, and as was argued in the Introduction, it is not accepted here that the Mao of the Cultural Revolution can or should be represented as the "essential" Mao, or that his ideas should necessarily attract greater emphasis accordingly. Moreover, while the Cultural Revolution and Mao's role in it are the subject of an ongoing re-evaluation both by Western analysts and, more importantly, by the Chinese themselves, it is necessary to tread with some caution before appropriating excessive significance for this confusing period in Mao's career. Secondly, and as will emerge as our analysis unfolds, there is in fact surprisingly little of theoretical substance on the problems of causation and time in the writings of the Cultural Revolution period. While this is in itself noteworthy, it again argues against apportioning a lengthy analysis to

this period based primarily on the assumption of the significance of the Cultural Revolution as a political phenomenon of which Mao was the principal architect.

In attempting any appraisal of Mao's position during the Cultural Revolution, it is necessary at the outset to stress that he continued, both on the eve of the Cultural Revolution and throughout its course, to perceive and depict the struggle within society and the Party as a class struggle. Indeed, we are reminded of the centrality of class struggle in the historical process by the Central Committee Circular of May 16, 1966; "...the several thousand years of human history is a history of class struggle".⁶ As early as January 1965, in an important document known as The Twenty Three Articles (which was according to Chinese sources drawn up under Mao's supervision), the continuing struggle between socialism and capitalism was depicted as the principal contradiction whose reflected influence reached even to leadership levels within the Party itself.⁷ Moreover, the language there clearly presaged the central preoccupation which was to emerge with the Cultural Revolution some twelve months later. "The key point of this movement", the document reads, "is to rectify those people in positions of authority within the Party who take the capitalist road...".⁸

Yet, the assertion that the Communist Party itself was not immune

6. GPCR documents, p. 23.

7. Ssu-ch'ing, p. 119; "This situation of class struggle is necessarily reflected within the Party". On this point, see also Wansui (1969), p. 598. For the Chinese claim that The Twenty Three Articles were drawn up under Mao's personal supervision see GPCR documents, pp. 56, 64.

8. Ssu-ch'ing, p. 120.

from such societal class struggle is hardly surprising given Mao's continued insistence over the years that class struggle within society was necessarily reflected within the Party, and that conversely, where there existed an intra-Party struggle, this must be viewed as a manifestation of the wider class struggle within the confines of the Party and explained accordingly. It was argued in the previous Chapter that this notion of reflected class struggle within the Party was facilitated by Mao's belief that the Communist Party had been and remained a trans-class organization, and that this incorporation of various classes represented the social mechanism whereby class struggle could be introduced and develop within the organization of the Party. It emerges from the documents of the Cultural Revolution that Mao continued to employ such a conception of the Party as a heterogeneous and trans-class organizational entity, and that this conception was utilized as an explanatory device for the large-scale struggles rending the Party. In his famous 1965 conversation with Andre Malraux, Mao had referred to the social "strata" (*jieceng*) in society which gave rise to and were reflected in the Party as a tendency towards "revisionism". These "strata" included the old landlords, rich peasants, capitalists, and the various groups of intellectuals from them⁹ who, along with (and often through) their offspring, were represented within the ranks of the Party. Moreover, Mao pointed to the fact that many of these intellectuals (teachers,

9. It is important to note that Mao did not (as Mannheim, for example, did) perceive the intellectuals as a "free-floating", "socially unattached", or non-class social group. See Miscellany II, p. 375; Wansui (1969), p. 634; "At the present, the greater part of the universities, middle schools, and primary schools have been monopolized by the intellectuals who have emerged from the ranks of the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, and the landlord and rich peasant class". During the 1955-64 period, Mao had explicitly stated "Intellectuals...do not constitute a class; they are attached either to the bourgeoisie or to the proletariat". (TEWC, p. 14; ZKDDZY, p. 14; MTTU, p. 169; Wansui (1969), p. 408.)

reporters, and technicians) were products of the old society and, left behind by the Guomindang in 1949, had been utilized by the Communists due to the dearth of the skills they could provide. Because of their positions, their influence was disproportionately greater than their actual numbers. The trans-class nature of the Party was such that revisionism's "base" within society thus gave rise to a "base" within the Party which reflected the aspirations of its social "base".¹⁰

Again, in a discussion of February 1967, Mao referred again to the heterogeneous character of the Party, and indicated that the complex sociological character of the Party was an important factor in its constitution as an arena for the struggles between its constituent elements from the wider social context.¹¹ Thus, when Mao commented in 1968 that "the struggle within the Party Central Committee is a reflection of the social struggle",¹² it was, at least to a certain extent, a function of the view that the heterogeneous and trans-class character of the Party facilitated that "reflection".

However, while it may be true that Mao perceived the trans-class and heterogeneous composition of the Party as a convenient device for the explanation of the means by which class struggle could find manifestation (or reflection) within the Party, it must be pointed out that the notion of class struggle employed during the Cultural Revolution tended to concentrate on the political nature of the clash between class and class in their struggle for supremacy. The notion that "all class struggles are political struggles" was, in fact, represented

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- 10. Wansui (1969), pp. 621-2; Andre Malraux, Anti-Memoirs (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968), p. 383.
 - 11. Wansui (1969), pp. 665-6.
 - 12. Miscellany II, p. 480; Wansui (1969), p. 698.

in the 16 May 1966 circular as a "basic Marxist thesis" (*jiben lundian*).¹³
 This notion of class struggle as "political struggle" must be seen as an important aspect of Mao's conception of the type of class struggle which he perceived at the time of the Cultural Revolution.

While the notion of class struggle *qua* political struggle represented a convenient intellectual construction for Mao's explanation of the struggle then developing within the CCP and Chinese society, it must be remembered that such an interpretation of Marxism has a long pedigree. As was observed in Chapter I, it is possible to demonstrate (without being overly tendentious) that Marx himself perceived the actual and conscious struggle between classes as a political struggle. Moreover, Lenin had imbued this position with a strong sense of orthodoxy by emphasizing the political aspect of class struggle. Indeed, in his article on the life and doctrine of Karl Marx (1913), Lenin had asserted the position from which the 16 May 1966 circular was to draw inspiration and legitimacy:

...Marx gave brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, of an analysis of the position of each individual class, and sometimes of various groups or strata within a class, showing plainly why and how 'every class struggle is a political struggle'.¹⁴

It is also evident, looking back through Mao's own intellectual career, that the realm of politics, and the class struggle at the political level, had played important (though occasionally ambiguously-described) roles in his reconstruction of society's structure and function. During

13. GPCR documents, pp. 14, 22. According to the editorial An Epoch Making Document, "the May 16th, 1966 circular...(was) drawn up under the personal supervision of the great leader Chairman Mao". (PR 11:21 (May 24, 1968), p. 8.)

14. Collected Works, Op. cit., XXI, p. 59. Emphasis in original.

the Yan'an period, for example, Mao had perceived a conceptual distinction between the class structure and the overt struggle between the classes which constituted that structure. The overt struggle was incorporated into the realm of "politics". Likewise, during the post-cooperativization period, Mao had regarded the contradictions which emerged because of the imbalance between the relations and forces of production as frequently (though not always, and never in the future communist society) giving rise to a class-inspired struggle in the superstructure of society; moreover, elements of the superstructure (such as the state and the political party) were invariably categorized as owing their production and generation to the existence of classes within the relations of production.

The important point that arises here is not so much that Mao continued to perceive and depict the class struggle as political, but whether he continued to perceive a relationship between that struggle and such economic factors as ownership, the social conditions of class existence, the manner in which society's material wealth was distributed, and so on. It was argued that Mao had persisted in the 1955-64 period in perceiving a strong linkage between the unresolved problem of the ownership system and the various (supposedly) class-inspired maladies of Chinese society. During the Cultural Revolution, however, this linkage appears to have grown very tenuous in Mao's mind, if judged from his writings of this period. Nowhere in the documents of the Cultural Revolution do we find any extended or sophisticated analysis of the underlying class features of Chinese society which could have given rise to the extent of the struggles within the political and ideological realms of the superstructure.¹⁵

15. This in spite of Mao's own injunction that "everything must be handled and reasoned out from the point of view of class and class struggle and the method of class analysis..."; MP, p. 141.

Rather, one finds something of an explanatory pastiche constituted of references to such factors as the continuing influence of intellectuals previously employed under the Guomindang regime,¹⁶ attempts by the bourgeoisie to stage a "come-back",¹⁷ the force of habit within society as an impediment to change,¹⁸ and the continued existence of the "remnants" of the former exploiting classes within socialist society.¹⁹ These scattered references are not systematically incorporated into a larger analysis that realistically demonstrates (rather than merely asserts) the relationship between the political struggle and the class formations and antagonisms of Chinese society. In the absence of such a coherent and systematic analysis of Chinese society and its social classes, one can only conclude that Mao was reverting to a rather crude form of reductionism to assert the class nature of the struggle both within and without the Party; because a struggle exists, it must be a class-generated struggle, and those against whom one is struggling must belong to an opposing class. This form of reasoning is sadly reminiscent of the crude form of reductionist analysis raised by Mao's On One Party Dictatorship of 1938 (and discussed above, Chapter II).

Consequently, we find during the Cultural Revolution that the emphasis is on the superstructural nature of the conflict, and the assertion (and although it is largely assertion, no judgement is made here as to its accuracy) that such conflict was largely a function of a class struggle. Thus the Cultural Revolution is frequently referred to as

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- 16. Malraux, Op. cit., p. 383; Wansui (1969), pp. 621-2; also Wansui (1969), pp. 665-6; also MP, p. 153.
 - 17. GPCR documents, pp. 42-3.
 - 18. GPCR documents, pp. 43, 49; also MP, pp. 144-5.
 - 19. Wansui (1969), pp. 665-6.

a "political revolution",²⁰ and its goals stated in terms of a revolution to assert control over the ideological and political areas of the superstructure. For example, the Central Committee Decision of August 1966 asserted the aim of the Cultural Revolution was "to revolutionize people's ideology",²¹ while Mao in 1967 declared its goal was "to solve the problem of world outlook";²² elsewhere, the task was portrayed as taking control "of the superstructure, the ideology, by preparing public opinion".²³ In fact, the importance of creating a favourable public opinion as a necessary prerequisite to the seizure of political power was raised on several occasions.²⁴ This seizure of political power through revolution was necessitated by the fact that a section of the dictatorship of the proletariat had been "usurped" by the bourgeoisie.²⁵ Moreover, "the basic problem of revolution", we are informed, "is the problem of political power. The possession of political power means the possession of everything; the loss of it means the loss of everything".²⁶ Hence, the need for the Cultural Revolution.

Yet, this belief that the Cultural Revolution was a revolution whose avowed aim was the seizure of political power does raise problems even within the context of the view of causation and its sequence within society held previously by Mao, and discussed in some

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- 20. MP, p. 153; also China Quarterly No. 37 (January-March 1969), pp. 169-173; also PR 11:21 (May 24, 1968), p. 9.
 - 21. GPCR documents, p. 53.
 - 22. Miscellany II, p. 459; Wansui (1969), pp. 676-7.
 - 23. MP, p. 136.
 - 24. MP, pp. 136, 140; also MTTU, p. 275; Wansui (1969), p. 662.
 - 25. Miscellany II, p. 451; Wansui (1969), p. 668.
 - 26. MP, p. 143; see also Miscellany II, p. 453; Wansui (1969), p. 670; "The main thing is which class seizes political power. That is the fundamental question..."

detail in the previous chapter (see IV.I above). One of the principal factors to emerge from that discussion was that Mao perceived the various elements of society as in a state of dynamic interaction and interrelationship. Pressures for change emerging within the relations of production would necessarily give rise to a superstructure for change, and it was on the successful resolution of contradictions within the superstructure that resolution within the relations of production depended. While his view of the nature of the historical process put no definite temporal limit on the ability of conservative elements of the superstructure to obstruct change, the notion of society advancing inexorably ruled out the possibility that the capacity for obstruction was indefinite. Moreover, what was inherent in this view was the assumption that the pressure for change (and presumably for conservatism or reaction) within the superstructure had to emerge firstly within the relations of production (primarily the ownership system). It could not emerge autonomously within the superstructure. According to this view, the fact that a "section of the dictatorship of the proletariat" had been "usurped" by the bourgeoisie, thus necessitating a further seizure of power by the proletariat and its agents, would imply (if the historical logic of the period 1955-64 were to apply) that there had been a serious reversal within one or more of the aspects of the relations of production, this leading to a marked strengthening of elements within the superstructure reflecting and representing that retrogression. It is fairly clear that, as the Socialist Education Movement progressed, Mao became increasingly concerned with the form that economic development was taking, especially in the rural areas. There is, however, no adequate theoretical appraisal of just how this deleterious form of

development was emerging within an economic base of which the ownership system had been largely reformed along socialist lines, nor how this development was related to changes within the superstructure.

It would appear, in fact, that Mao was forced to invoke the continued existence of formerly dominant exploiting classes within Chinese society as the main factor in this development. In The Twenty Three Articles (1965), these class enemies are accused of employing "peaceful evolution" to restore capitalism.²⁷ Yet this notion of "peaceful evolution" is one which sits rather uncomfortably with a view of history which takes as its primary point of departure concepts of struggle, contradiction and conflict as the principal source and manifestation of change within society. It was shown in the previous chapter that Mao refused to acknowledge the possibility that socialism could be achieved through peaceful, parliamentary or reformist means. We are expected to believe, however, that a basically socialist ownership system (and this the principal element of the relations of production, the economic base) could be qualitatively altered via "peaceful evolution" into a capitalist form. It is, in fact, difficult to see how such a formula could be reconciled with Mao's previously held view of historical causation.

By virtue of Mao's theory of contradictions also, the notion of "peaceful evolution" is difficult to accommodate. The fact that Mao indicated that such "peaceful evolution" could lead to a restoration of capitalism, signifies implicitly that such a major

27. Ssu-ch'ing, p. 119. The Twenty Three Articles represents, in fact, the most coherent analysis of these developments within the relations of production. Yet this short document cannot be regarded as anything approaching a serious attempt by Mao to provide a convincing analysis of the root causes of a political upheaval of the extent of the Cultural Revolution.

(qualitative) transformation could come about through merely peaceful or quantitative means, and without the struggle asserted by Mao to be the absolute character of the relationship between aspects of a contradiction. There would thus appear something of a theoretical "gap" between this concept of "peaceful evolution" and the notion of overt struggle that need accompany the "conspicuous change" between aspects of the principal contradiction leading to a qualitative transformation of society, that Mao's theory of contradictions would seem to demand. One gathers the impression, indeed, that the notion of "peaceful evolution", rather than constituting in Mao's mind a concept capable of facilitating coherent explanation, represented an improvised formula utilized to accommodate a contingency not readily incorporated within the framework of his conception of historical causation or his theory of contradictions.

There are, however, aspects of Mao's position at the time of the Cultural Revolution which are not wholly incompatible with his theoretical views on historical causation raised during the 1955-64 period. Firstly, it must be remembered that an important element of Mao's perception of superstructural function was his belief that thought and ideology tend to lag behind changes within the forces and relations of production. This gap was a function of the time-lag explicitly enunciated in Mao's theory of ideological reflection; for thought, habits, and ideology tend to be resistant to change, even when the social conditions which had generated them had been eroded or had disappeared. This time-lag in the process of reflection constituted for Mao one of the factors which contributed to the importance of the superstructure as an arena capable of obstructing the pressure for change emerging elsewhere within society. The

rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution indicates a very real concern on Mao's part with this function of the superstructure; for the superstructure had come by 1966 to represent an element of society stubbornly resisting (partly through the inertia of ideology and the time-lag in its reflection) the progress of society towards a fully consolidated socialist type. This concern with the persistence of ideas inimicable to such a social system emerged clearly in the 8 August 1966 decision of the Central Committee:

Although the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, it is still trying to use the old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds and endeavour to stage a come-back. The proletariat must do just the opposite: it must meet head-on every challenge of the bourgeoisie in the ideological field and use the new ideas, culture, customs and habits of the proletariat to change the mental outlook (*jingshen mianmao*) of the whole of the society...our objective is...to transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure that do not correspond to the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system.²⁸

The same document refers also to the "force of old social habits" as a factor in the resistance to change,²⁹ and elsewhere that these "old ideas, culture, customs and habits" had been "left over from all the exploiting classes over thousands of years".³⁰ The notion of a time-lag between changes in the material life of society and their reflection in the minds of men emerges clearly also in the following statement by Mao and quoted in the People's Daily in August 1967:

28. GPCR documents, pp. 42-3.

29. GPCR documents, pp. 34, 43.

30. GPCR documents, p. 49.

Although the socio-economic system has been transformed, reactionary thought, bourgeois and upper-petty bourgeois thought inherited from the past, still exists in the minds of a considerable number of people, and cannot be transformed quickly. Its transformation needs time, a long period of time. This is the class struggle in (our) society.³¹

Not only is the notion of a time-lag clearly evident here, but also its relationship (in Mao's mind) to the struggle between classes. Consequently, the Cultural Revolution was represented as a movement to divest the "bourgeoisie and the remnants of feudalism" of the "ideological and cultural positions" still held by them.³²

Secondly, it is fairly evident that, although Mao perceived the Cultural Revolution itself in largely political or ideological terms, he indicated an implicit purpose of it in the longer term to be the further expansion of the forces of production, the "material base" of Chinese society. It will be remembered that his views of 1955-64 took the resolution of contradictions within various inter-related sectors of the "social system" as anterior to any major expansion in the previously limited developments of the forces of production.³³ It is clear from several statements made during the Cultural Revolution that Mao considered the problems of ideology (both in terms of thought and institutional structures) as serious impediments to the further expansion of gains made in the field of production, and that with their removal, an increased productive capacity would materialize. "Revolution is the emancipation of the forces of production", Mao is

31. MP, pp. 144-5.

32. GPCR documents, p. 21.

33. It is worth pointing out here that Mao continued during the Cultural Revolution to insist that capitalist "sprouts" had emerged within Chinese feudal society prior to Western intervention; see MP, pp. 38-9.

quoted as saying by the People's Daily (August 1967), "it promotes the development of the productive forces".³⁴ Subsequently, revolution within the "social system" could not be viewed as isolated from the promotion of production, and had to be viewed as two aspects of a related process.³⁵ This relationship of superstructural (and especially ideological) change to the subsequent development of the forces of production emerges clearly in the Central Committee Decision of 8 August 1966:

The aim of the great proletarian cultural revolution is to revolutionize people's ideology and as a consequence to achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results in all fields of work...The great proletarian cultural revolution is a powerful motive force for the development of the social productive forces in our country.³⁶

However, despite the continuance of such explanatory themes within Mao's thought, the assertion of a peaceful restoration of capitalism (via evolutionary means) as a significant possibility in the development of society, cannot adequately be explained by recourse to a conception of historical progress which had previously maintained the advance of society to be, while not constant, virtually inexorable. It is hardly feasible that Mao would have regarded such a radical transformation to an alternate mode of production as being merely a minor "dip" in the upward temporal advance of society. On the contrary, it appears from statements made on the eve of the Cultural Revolution and throughout its course, that Mao had come to regard a reversion to capitalism as one of the two possibilities open to Chinese

34. MP, p. 143.

35. See MTTU, p. 276; Wansui (1969), p. 663.

36. GPCR, p. 53.

society. Does this signify that the historical optimism which had characterized Mao's approach to the historical process was, at the eleventh hour, beginning to desert him? If we turn to an examination of Mao's few brief comments on historical time and the future during this period (1965-69), it does appear probable that he was no longer quite so sanguine in his optimism regarding the actualization of the historical promise held out by Marxism, the goal which had (in one form or another) informed his political actions for over four decades.

The limited attention Mao directed to the problem of historical time and the future during the Cultural Revolution would lead us to expect that some change had occurred in his conception of the temporal aspect of the historical process. Formerly, Mao had been hardly reticent concerning the destiny of mankind, and his references to time and the future are scattered liberally throughout the writings of the Yan'an and post-Cooperativization periods. Such references are in general optimistic in their uncompromising assertion of a progress in history, despite variations in the view Mao held of the future promised society. During the Cultural Revolution, however, the occasional note of optimism is usually balanced by a qualifying note of caution. Mao's letter of July 1966 to Jiang Qing is a case in point. After expressing his unease at Lin Biao's theory of the political coup, Mao averred that "our future is bright, but the road before us is twisted".³⁷ A similarly cautious view emerges in the following statement by Mao which, while raising echoes of his former position, stresses the very real nature of the obstacles standing in the way of a final realization of communist society:

37. IS IX:4 (January 1973), p. 94.

We have won a great victory. But the defeated class will continue to struggle. Its members are still about and it still exists. Therefore we cannot speak of the final victory, not for decades. We must not lose vigilance. From the Leninist point of view, the final victory in one socialist country not only requires the efforts of the proletariat and the broad popular masses at home, but also depends on the victory of the world revolution and the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man on this earth so that all mankind will be emancipated. Consequently, it is wrong to talk about the final victory of the revolution in our country lightly; it runs counter to Leninism and does not conform to the facts.³⁸

It is interesting here that Leninism is invoked to indicate that any expectation of an early consummation of a truly communist society would be unwarranted given the impediments to such a realization; Leninism being raised as almost synonymous with a pragmatic comprehension of the obstacles to change, and the rejection of any fanciful utopian notions at odds with such a comprehension. It would appear indeed that Mao is calling on a rather different Lenin from the one who penned The State and Revolution, and who vouchsafed with such certainty the arrival of the communist society with its concomitant freedom from the oppression of the state. Elsewhere, Mao emphasized on several occasions that there would have to be several more cultural revolutions, and that even then, there would be no "peace and quiet":

The victory or defeat of the revolution can be determined only over a long period of time. If it is badly handled there is always the danger of a capitalist restoration. All members of the party and all the people of our country must not think that after one, two, three or four great cultural revolutions there will be peace and quiet. They must always be on the alert and must never relax their vigilance.³⁹

38. MP, p. 159.

39. MP, p. 139.

And in a talk in 1967, Mao reiterated that cultural revolutions of the magnitude of the present one, would be a recurring feature during at least the next century:

The cost of this Great Cultural Revolution has been very great, and even though the question of the struggle between the two classes and the two roads cannot be resolved by one, two, three or four Great Cultural Revolutions, still, this Great Cultural Revolution should consolidate things for a decade at least. In the course of one century, it may be possible to launch such a revolution two or three times at most.⁴⁰

In both of these last two quotes it is noticable that Mao's references to the future are cast in prophetic terms singularly lacking the tenor of historical optimism which had previously characterized such prophetic utterances. The future now emerges as a recurring series of titanic struggles to prevent the revolution from degenerating. In perceiving the future as a continuing series of such struggles,⁴¹ Mao was, however, persisting in the view (which emerged during the post-Cooperativization period) that the society of the future, be it consolidated socialist, communist or beyond, would be characterized by struggles and contradictions;⁴² yet, during the post-Cooperativization period, this conception had still contained a strong element of optimism regarding the attainability of a communist society, and the fulfilment of Marxism's historical promise. It would appear that the Cultural Revolution may have sufficiently influenced Mao to the extent that he was now far less sanguine about the possibility of the establishment of such a society, a position well removed from the eschatological certainty of Yan'an days.

40. Miscellany II, p. 459; Wansui (1969), pp. 676-7.

41. See also MTTU, p. 283.

42. Cf. Mao's assertion that "modern history is a continual process of one dividing into two and continual struggle..." (MTTU, p. 240; Wansui (1969), p. 629). It would appear that Mao saw this process as continuing without cease into the future.

In fact, it would appear that Mao's belief that a "restoration of capitalism" was a significant historical possibility bore serious implications for his previously held view, which perceived an inexorable progression towards a communist society which represented an historically-necessary stage in the development of society. While he did not, of course, overtly deny the possibility of the attainment of such a future society, the radically reduced optimism of the Cultural Revolution documents leads to the conclusion that the historical promise of communism was coming to occupy a diminishing function within the conception of the historical process held by the aging Mao.⁴³ It is also instructive that the notion of a spiral-form of advance in which society ascends through the helix of time is not again raised during this period. Mao does, however, make reference to the notion of a wave-like form of advance, although in this instance the metaphor is somewhat transformed to suit the current political environment; "No need to be afraid of tidal waves", Mao is quoted as saying in a People's Daily editorial, "human society has been evolved out of tidal waves".⁴⁴ Elsewhere, he raises a metaphor which depicts the progression towards the future as a "journey" and the act of establishing socialism as that of "crossing the pass"; "Can we, dare we, cross the pass into socialism? This pass leads to the final destruction of classes, and the three great differences...You must demonstrate once and for all whether or not the pass into socialism has been crossed".⁴⁵ This invocation of a metaphor somewhat akin to a

43. Chen David Hsiao-Hsin also draws attention to this decline in optimism during the Cultural Revolution. See his The Thought of Mao in the Light of Chinese Tradition and Revolutionary Development (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Utah, 1970), p. 117.

44. MP, p. 114.

45. MTTU, pp. 254-5; Wansui (1969), pp. 649-50.

socialist's Pilgrim's Progress, raises imagery of a journey undertaken through the pitfalls of class society; yet, it must be noticed from Mao's comments here that the "pass" to be crossed leads only to socialism, and not the ultimate goal for the weary traveller.

One aspect of Mao's approach to the interpretation of history that remained unchanged was his opposition to an historiography which took as its point of departure the activities of history's notables, its rulers and statesmen. At the Hangzhou Conference of December 1965, Mao criticized those philosophers and historians who wanted nothing other than to write "about emperors, kings, generals and ministers (*di wang jiang xiang*)"; because of this preoccupation, they could not Mao asserted, "produce history".⁴⁶ Mao then went on to contrast this approach with that employed by Qi Benyu whose article "Wei geming er yanjiu lishi" (Study history for the sake of revolution) had just been published in Hongqi (Red Flag).⁴⁷ Qi's article was, in Mao's opinion, "excellent" (*xiedehao*), and he claimed to have read it three times. In his article, Qi had vigorously attacked the "emperor-king" school, and had done so by utilizing another concept which Mao himself had had cause to employ in the late 1930s to categorize his own approach to history; that of *lishizhuyi* ("history-ism"). The problems associated with the translation of this term into English were raised and discussed previously (see 2.IV above); however, it is evident from Mao's recommendation of Qi's article that he continued to perceive the term positively. According to Qi, a *lishizhuyi* approach to history which was genuinely Marxist had to take class and class

46. MTTU, p. 237; Wansui (1969), p. 626.

47. Hongqi (Red Flag), December 1965 (No. 13), pp. 14-22.

struggle as the centre of the historical process.⁴⁸ A non-(*fei*) *lishizhuyi* approach to history, such as the "emperor-king" school, violated the central precept that it was the people, and the people alone, who were the motive force behind the creation of world history.⁴⁹ In March of 1966, Mao was once again to comment unfavourably on the "emperor-king" school, and on this occasion he was to name Fan Wenlan as an exponent of this form of historical approach.⁵⁰

It was also at the Hangzhou Conference that Mao was to allude to the old slogan of Zhang Zhidong "Chinese learning for the substance, Western learning for practical application", to indicate that the Chinese could not "adopt Western learning as the substance".⁵¹ It could be argued that such a position ruled out the possibility of utilizing a Western doctrine such as Marxism as the fundamental basis for a Chinese view of the world or guide to action. It must be remembered, however, that Mao had not recommended (during the Yan'an or post-Cooperativization periods) the wholesale utilization of Marxism *qua* Western ideology within the Chinese context. On the contrary, Mao had argued that the utility of Marxism lay in its central and universal abstractions. Such abstractions represented for Mao acultural assertions or maxims relevant to the operation of all societies; as such, they could not be viewed as "Western", or limited

48. Note, however, that Qi concedes the possibility of a bourgeoisie *lishizhuyi*; *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

49. Apart from this positive reaffirmation of the concept of *lishizhuyi*, much of Qi's article is constituted of a rather weak exposition of the "proletarian science thesis", which claims that the proletariat is the only class in history which has been capable of transcending class limitations and gaining an objective and scientific view of the world.

50. Miscellany II, p. 376; Wansui (1969), p. 635.

51. MTTU, pp. 234-5; Wansui (1969), p. 624.

by the fact of their derivation from a Western theory. Their universality was guaranteed by the fact that the phenomena described by those abstractions were common to all human societies; the form in which those phenomena found concrete manifestation was a function of a specific historical situation, but such specificity could not constitute a negation of the universal laws towards which the central verities of Marxism drew attention. It is this that Mao had in mind when he commented that "social phenomena do not change according to man's will".⁵²

The basic universal or acultural truths of Marxism had to be conjoined in a particular national context with those regularities characterizing that context. Only by that union could Marxism constitute a complete ideology, and hence have any utility in guiding action. Consequently, Mao's contribution to this formula had in previous years been to provide what he believed to be a correct reading of those regularities characterizing the Chinese historical context, and in so doing, provide a union of the universal and the particular, the abstract and the concrete. Mao had not previously acclaimed his contribution to Marxism to represent anything more than this; nor had he asserted his ideas to represent an extension of the central verities constituting the timeless and universally applicable axioms of Marxism in the abstract. "Mao Zedong Thought" was historically and culturally limited, and perceived as such by its creator. Here again, however, the documents of the Cultural Revolution leave the impression that there had been some modification in this conception, and some loosening of the national or cultural restrictions previously

52. Miscellany II, p. 489; Wansui (1969), p. 707.

imposed on that body of thought. Although one must regard with some caution the many expressions of adulation accorded "Mao Zedong Thought" during the Cultural Revolution by Mao's followers and admirers,⁵³ it seems probable that Mao was prepared to accept some elevation of the status of his thought within this universal/particular (or abstract/concrete) dichotomy. If we examine the preamble to the Draft Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party (obviously inspired or written by Mao and circulating towards the end of 1968), it becomes obvious that some alteration in his own conception of his contribution to Marxism had, in fact, occurred:

Mao Tse-tung's Thought is the Marxism-Leninism of the era when imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is advancing towards world-wide victory...Mao Tse-tung...has combined the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with concrete revolutionary practice, and has inherited, defended and developed Marxism-Leninism, raising it to a completely new stage...⁵⁴

While there is here a formal reassertion of the union of the universal and the particular, it is important to note that there is, in this formulation, no reference to the limitation of national or cultural particularities on the utility of Mao Zedong's thought. On the contrary, the notion that Mao had "developed Marxism-Leninism" and raised it "to a completely new stage", would appear to assert its validity over and above the historical context within which it had found generation. It is a moot point, however, whether Mao seriously considered that elements of his thought were of such timeless validity

53. Mao, it seems, also treated such sentiment with some caution. See his comments in Miscellany II, p. 380; Wansui (1969), p. 639, especially following Lin Biao's interjection.

54. China Quarterly, No. 37 (January-March 1969), pp. 169-173.

that they could now be transferred to the other (universal) sector of the ideological equation. It is possible that such assertions concerning the validity of Mao's thought may have been made largely for public consumption, and especially with a view to bolstering the Chinese case ideologically in the polemic surrounding the Sino-Soviet dispute. However, the very fact that Mao was prepared to utilize such a formulation does betoken at the very least a rather less circumspect observation of an interpretation of Marxism-Leninism employed with some consistency by him for some three decades.

It would appear, therefore, that the documents of the Cultural Revolution provide clear indications of a changing emphasis along several parameters within Mao's conception of the historical process. Both in terms of historical causation and his perception of the future, it is clear that the extent of the Cultural Revolution as a political phenomenon gave Mao some pause to consider his position. This is reflected especially in the diminished optimism portrayed by Mao in his references to the future development of society; also in Mao's utilization of the concept of "peaceful evolution" as a formula to explain the possible establishment of capitalism in China. On the basis of these factors alone, it is clear that Mao's position during the Cultural Revolution cannot be regarded as constituting some essential distillation of his political and historical wisdom and insights. On the contrary, if one accepts that the decade prior to the Cultural Revolution constituted the era of the "mature" Mao (and it is hoped that the analysis of the previous chapter went some way towards establishing that), it is possible to perceive in the Mao of the Cultural Revolution something of a deviation (perhaps deterioration)

from the position formulated during that period. Consequently, such changes in emphasis within Mao's thought reinforce once again the view that Mao's approach to the interpretation of society and history cannot be safely analyzed separate from the historical situation which influenced and informed that approach. As a product of a certain history, Mao's own view of history was necessarily circumscribed by that history.

CHAPTER SIXConclusion

This study has pursued several themes through Mao's writings across the years 1936 to 1969. It is the purpose of this final chapter to not only draw out certain conclusions which appear justified as a result of this study, but to explore some of the implications and ramifications raised by the methodological assumptions on which the study was based. These assumptions were spelt out briefly in the Introduction and Chapter I. It is appropriate, however, to return to the premises outlined there, and to ask whether those assumptions appear validated by the study itself; also, to outline ideas, concepts and problem areas which have presented themselves to this writer in the course of research and writing.

Any interpretation of a body of texts is just that; an interpretation. This writer makes no claim to have been divinely inspired in reconstructing Mao's position, or in articulating with some coherence areas of confusion or silence in the texts themselves. Nevertheless, the interpretation offered in this study has (it is hoped) clearly presented the methodological restrictions and assumptions under which it has proceeded, such that the final interpretation is as close as possible to Mao's intention. The first of such methodological restrictions was the utilization of an exegetical or textual approach. However, such an approach is not without its difficulties.

One such difficulty is the problematic position which the interpreter occupies in the textual search and the analytical

reconstruction which follows. While no doubt the interpreter of any body of writings cannot but approach the texts with some preconceived ideas and anticipatory framework, this study (while hopefully setting out such ideas and framework clearly) attempted not to prejudge how those themes would appear or develop within Mao's writings. A consequence of this approach was that a very careful, indeed painstaking, search was required to unearth all statements which might be relevant to elucidation and interpretation. However, in the final analysis, some personal judgement was required, this due in part to the silences and lack of consistency occasionally evident in the material extricated from the texts. Faced with such silences and contradictions, this interpreter attempted to isolate the intent of Mao's position. Even the silences in the text could be startlingly revealing; witness the lack of utilization of the concept of superstructure during the Yan'an period. Having completed a close textual search of the Yan'an documents, and preparing to formulate an interpretation of Mao's position during this period, I was nonplussed to discover that the texts were largely silent (save for the major exception discussed in Chapter II) about the role of the superstructure in the development of society. This textual silence indicated that a rather different tack had to be taken, and that it was not possible to construct any reasoned interpretation of Mao's position clinging to the few references to the superstructure which existed in the texts. Consequently, a further search was in order, and an attempt made to locate some theoretical articulation which had substituted in Mao's mind for the need for a discrete base/superstructure dichotomy. The decision that the On New Democracy formulation represented such a theoretical articulation was arrived at by analysis of the texts subsequent to the writing of On New

Democracy in order to perceive if the On New Democracy tripartite formulation was in fact employed. Indeed, it transpired that, in terms of both textual evidence and the general spirit of Mao's approach to the interpretation of society and history, one could perceive the influence of the On New Democracy formulation clearly reflected. Another case in point was Mao's refusal during the 1955-64 period to incorporate the forces of production within the "social system". This again was a surprising revelation. Yet, it transpired as the study unfolded that the exclusion of the forces of production from the "social system" was not fortuitous, and was in fact an important (and perhaps central) element of his approach to social and historical interpretation. Both of these examples came to light as a result of the attempt not to prejudge what a detailed textual search might unearth; and while that search was not of course without a theoretical focus, the existence of such a theoretical focus did not negate the possibility of a degree of open-mindedness in the textual search.

It might be objected by one seeking to establish more closely Mao's affinity with Soviet Marxism and the Marxism of the Third International that the textual silence of most of the Yan'an texts regarding the nature and role of the superstructure is not necessarily indicative of Mao's failure to employ the concept, even if the term itself is not utilized. However, such an interpretation permits a good deal more latitude and scope for personal interpretation than an interpretation which sticks closely to the textual evidence. By limiting oneself to the concrete evidence of the texts, the role of the interpreter is not necessarily removed; the interpretation which results will, however, be more accessible to a reasoned criticism

and debate of the substance of the interpretation. By ignoring the silences in the texts, and seeking out expected concepts through perceived (but not explicit) illusions to their employment, the interpreter puts himself beyond the bounds of reasoned argument and criticism.

In a case where the textual evidence is ignored (as it might be in the case of the superstructure during the Yan'an period, or the forces of production during the 1955-64 period), the interpretation assumes a more personal quality, and the interpreter assumes for himself a wider latitude in imputing intention to the thought of the subject under investigation. This latter form of interpretation may not be devoid of interest or contemporary relevance, but it can no longer claim to be a textual study in the strict sense. There are, therefore, interpretations and interpretations; those which rely on the texts and remain as closely anchored to them as possible, and utilizing the evidence which the texts provide, are (it is suggested here) valid forms of exegesis; those which do not, and rely more closely on the interpreter's own predilections than the thoughts of his subject (as evidenced in the texts), have moved beyond the realm where a reasoned refutation is possible by an appeal to the only valid evidence available--that is, the texts themselves.

In a sense, it is true that it is never possible to arrive definitively at the intent of any author, and that the ideas which are presented in interpretation are not those of the author, but those of the interpreter. However, it is not accepted by this writer that such a truism imparts a *carte blanche* to the interpreter to impute any motive, theme or intention to the thoughts of the author under investigation.

To the contrary, the possibility of variation in interpretation due to the biases and predilections of the interpreter enjoins an even more rigorous application of a textual methodology, which, while not capable of completely excising those extraneous factors, serves to curtail their excessive influence. Moreover, if the various scholars working in the same area assume such a textual methodological restriction, the possibility of establishing an area for mutually-comprehensible dialogue is enhanced; within that area, an argument could be tested by recourse to the texts, and the texts would remain the final arbiter in adjudication between competing interpretations. Within this area, debate, discussion and criticism could be regarded as "reasonable"; this because an external point of reference would be accepted for adjudication by the participants. On the other hand, interpretations which do not abide by accepted norms of exegetical interpretation must be regarded as "unreasonable", for there is no way in which such interpretations could be exposed to external arbitration. A criticism which could be raised at this point is that interpretation cannot be definitively judged by recourse to an external reference point anyway, and that it would consequently have to be evaluated by reference to its own internal coherence and logic. It is not my intention to dispute the necessity for internal coherence in interpretation (and I will turn to this in more detail subsequently); my point is that the criterion of internal coherence and logic, if utilized in isolation, would not allow us to come to the conclusion that the interpretation demonstrated any necessary correlation with the ideas and themes of the author under investigation.

Let us take a few examples. If we were to encounter in one of the secondary critiques of Mao's writings a statement such as: "Mao

believed that the application of the human will alone is sufficient to transform the social environment", we would, under the restrictions of an exegetical methodology, respond by demanding not only concrete textual evidence for such a conclusion, but also evidence that such an assertion did not grossly contradict the general themes and tenor of Mao's ideas, as this is provided evidence in the texts themselves. If such textual evidence was not forthcoming, we would be forced to the conclusion that such an interpretation was an "unreasonable" argument, for it would be beyond the bounds of an intellectual discourse which permitted external arbitration. Nor could we accept the proposition that this interpretation did not depend for its validity on an external point of reference, but relied exclusively on the internal coherence and symmetry of the interpretation itself. Another example might be: "Mao attributed overwhelming significance to the causal role of the superstructure of society". Again, textual evidence would have to be forthcoming for us to accept such an interpretation, and if not, we would be justified in a demurral.

The proposition being suggested here is that, in order for a purposeful advance to be made in the study of the intellect and thought of Mao Zedong, it is necessary to determine some boundary which demarcates "reasonable" from "unreasonable" interpretations; the governing criteria for such a demarcation should be reference to the texts themselves as the external source of arbitration. Obviously (and as was conceded previously), the texts in isolation cannot speak for themselves; but reference to them can prevent interpretation from grossly assuming the predilections of the interpreter in complete disregard for the evidence which the texts contain. The exclusion of "unreasonable" arguments would thus be based on their inability to cite

textual reinforcement for their interpretation.

Of course, even within the confines of a textually-anchored "reasonable" area of interpretation, latitude for disagreement would remain. However, not only would such latitude be circumscribed by the necessary deference to the evidence contained in the texts, the debate which would result would have a greater possibility of being pursued in a mutually-comprehensible manner, the limitations on personal imputation being textually circumscribed. Moreover, a rigid application of a textual methodology would prevent an interpretation from transforming itself from a putative reconstruction of the thoughts of the author under investigation, into an unrestrained vehicle for the articulation of the interpreter's own views and predilections. It is hoped that this study, by adopting an exegetical approach, has avoided this latter danger, and presented an analysis clearly in tune with Mao's intent as this is provided evidence in the texts themselves.

However, the application of an exegetical methodology is an important, but not complete restriction on the limits of interpretation. It is obviously also of importance for the interpreter to establish his theoretical position on the themes which are to be pursued and extricated from the texts. Thus, in an interpretation of Mao's thought, it is necessary to work from an explicit reconstruction of the theoretical premises which will inform the textual search. Consequently, these must be spelt out with a reasonable degree of clarity; and of course, while the reader is not obliged to agree with that theoretical articulation, it should at least serve the function of alerting the reader to the theoretical position which the

interpreter occupied in performing both the textual search, and in the interpretive reconstruction which followed. Obviously, the possibility for constructive and mutually-comprehensible debate is enhanced on those occasions where there exists a reasonable degree of consensus regarding the theoretical premises of the interpretive study. Such a reasonable degree of consensus was evidently sadly lacking in the potentially useful debate which occurred in the pages of Modern China over the question of whether Mao was or was not a "voluntarist", and if so, whether this constituted a deviation from Marxism.¹ It is clear from this debate that there was very little theoretical consensus amongst the disputants over the nature of Marxism, and the consequent contributions appeared as ships in the night, lacking any substantial point of theoretical contact, and thus talking past (rather than at) each other.²

Nevertheless, even where there is lacking a complete unanimity or consensus on the question of the theoretical premises informing the textual study, if these are at least spelt out comprehensively and with a degree of clarity, the reader is then provided with a basis for judging not only the adequacy of those premises, but also the integrity and consistency of the study that follows. It is hoped, in the context of this study, that this theoretical articulation was achieved through the deliberations contained in Chapter One. This chapter had several difficult tasks to achieve. One of these was to

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1. See especially Volume 3, No. 2, pp. 125-186; and Volume 3, No. 4, pp. 379-464.
 2. Only one participant, Andrew Walder, was actually given sufficient space to articulate his theoretical premises; unfortunately, he followed this up with what can only be described as a rather weak interpretation of Mao's writings, one which demonstrated a less than adequate familiarity with the Mao texts themselves.

make some judgement about the relative importance of the Marxist influence as opposed to that of the Chinese tradition in informing Mao's approach to the interpretation and analysis of society and history. This was achieved by searching for parallels and divergences between Mao's views and those of the two major intellectual traditions by which he was influenced; and as was observed, the influence of the two traditions appeared to be uneven both across different themes, and across different periods in the development of Mao's intellectual career. In order to achieve such a judgement, it was necessary to have a degree of familiarity with the Mao texts before returning to an analysis of these two intellectual traditions. Following that analysis, and following a decision as to the importance to attach to the concepts and categories of these two traditions which appeared to have informed Mao's theoretical position, a close textual search could then be commenced, pursuing those themes which had emerged as potentially significant. For the important point is that Mao did not approach the interpretation of society and history in a theoretical vacuum, and he utilized concepts and categories which had to have some source of derivation; it was necessary, therefore, to be sensitive to the sort of theoretical constructions which might have been appropriated and utilized by Mao, and to be on the lookout for the manner in which these had been used in a personal way, and even subtly transformed by him.

It must be stressed, however, that this study was not concerned with attempting to trace in any definitive sense the intellectual genesis and development of the ideas utilized by Mao. Nevertheless, some judgement had to be made as to the constitution of the intellectual traditions which had influenced him, and the concepts and categories

which Mao had appropriated from these and utilized. Without such a judgement, the textual search would have been without focus, and the reconstruction hopelessly muddled.

It might be argued that such a judgement as to the relative import of the intellectual traditions which informed Mao allows a wide margin for latitude to the interpreter to once again impose his own interest and predilections onto the subject of his interpretation. This argument might run as follows: the interpreter schooled in Chinese history, language and culture, would be inclined to perceive in Mao's writings a reassertion of the Chinese tradition overlaid by a thin but transparent veneer of Marxism; or the obverse, the scholar versed in the history and debates of Marxism, and more at ease with the categories and concepts utilized by that intellectual tradition, would be inclined to perceive Mao as a brand of Marxist, and perceive the Chinese cultural element of his thought as of peripheral importance. This is a difficult proposition to counter, for it is obvious that there are interpretations of Mao's thought which fall into one or other of these two camps. The only apparent way out of this dilemma is for the Mao scholar to have a reasonable familiarity with the most pertinent aspects of both intellectual traditions, such that his sensitivity to possible influence from both can be heightened. Only then, by a close reading of the Mao texts, is it possible to make a judgement as to the relative importance of these two traditions. For example, it would seem clear (to this writer at least) that Mao eschewed certain cultural elements of the Chinese intellectual tradition; its lack of a wide causal synthesis in historical interpretation and writing, its emphasis on the scholar-officials in history, and its tendency towards an "heroic" vein; and

there is strong textual evidence to support such a contention. However, it is also clear that Mao did draw heavily on elements of the Chinese tradition in other areas; a clear example is his deployment of the "three epoch" historical periodization during the Yan'an period; and again, there is ample textual evidence to substantiate this interpretation. Likewise, there is also ample influence to suggest the strong influence of Marxist thought on Mao's approach to historical interpretation, and many of the concepts explicitly mobilized by him are clearly of Marxist derivation.

In summary, then, it is suggested that a methodologically valid approach to the analysis of Mao's thought should adopt two procedures. The first of these is the employment of an exegetical methodology; that is, the study should be premised on the assumption that the texts must constitute the final arbiter for interpretation. This presumes that no line of interpretation can proceed without clear and adequate reference to the texts. The second necessitates that the theoretical premises for the interpretation be articulated with a degree of clarity sufficient to enable the reader to judge the coherence and internal integrity of the interpretation. Evaluation of an interpretation would thus have recourse to both internal and external criteria for a judgement as to its soundness and validity; the external criteria represented by reference to the texts, and the internal by reference to the articulated theoretical assumptions on which the study is based.

As with any methodology, there are difficulties with this position. The purist (à la Foulcault) would insist that reference to the texts will tell us nothing, for the texts do not speak for

themselves. This is, I believe, an extremist position, and one which would undermine completely any possibility of an important area of intellectual inquiry which has a long and well-established tradition; for this position would exclude the possibility of attempting to determine the intent of an author, arguing that any interpretation can only be the voice of the interpreter, not that of the author under investigation. There is a certain logic here, but one taken to extremes, and one which must be resisted. The task of interpretation is (especially in the case of such politically important thinkers as Marx and Mao) of very real concern; while we may never be able to definitively isolate exactly what an author intended, the effort must be made, thus necessitating the assumption of the strenuous and at times irksome methodological restrictions which might allow the interpreter to arrive at as clear and precise an understanding of the author's intent as is possible; and this can only be achieved through a commitment to and close familiarity with the texts. Without such a commitment, this area of intellectual inquiry may well be reduced to an exercise in pamphleteering, in which the presumed inability to arrive at authorial intent is taken as a license to ride rough-shod over the texts and to utilize the exercise as a vehicle for presenting one's own predilections and fancies. Again, this must be resisted.

Let us now turn to a brief discussion of the other important element of the methodological premises of this study; that is, the employment of a periodization, and the concomitant rejection of an approach predicated on the possibility of a reconstruction of an "essential" Mao. This study divided Mao's intellectual career into six periods, and analyzed four of them. The necessity for constructing

a periodization was based on the assumption that Mao was, because of his varied political career and the fluctuating historical background against which he operated and to which he frequently reacted, heavily influenced by the nature of the contemporary historico-political environment. While the notion of sharp breaks in historical development is, it could be argued, largely a device employed by historians to reduce the often indecipherable long-hand of history to a short-hand intelligible to mere mortals, it would seem apparent that there have been several major watersheds in the development of Chinese history over the last century. Such major changes appear to have been reflected in the thinking and writing of those who lived through and experienced them. A good example of this is the May Fourth period. It is quite evident that this period did represent a watershed in Chinese history for a small but highly significant group of Chinese--the students and intellectuals; and their comprehension of this change is in evidence in the writings of this era. Mao's own political and intellectual career spanned several of such major watersheds; the May Fourth period, the Long March, the onset and cessation of the Anti-Japanese War, the cooperativization of agriculture in the 1950s, and so on; and these changes and Mao's perception of them are clearly reflected in his writings. Moreover, Mao's central position in the historical drama served to increase his sensitivity to such changes and fluctuations in the flow of history.

The assumption made by this study that it is necessary to establish a periodization in the development of Mao's thought should not however be read as an assertion that all interpretations of major thinkers need necessarily deploy such a methodological procedure.

To the contrary, the decision to deploy a periodization must be premised on both the evidence of the texts and an appreciation of the historical background against which the texts were penned. It would seem, for example, that there is less justification for the establishment of a periodization in the development of Marx's thought (despite Althusser's pronouncements) than there is for Mao's. Marx, although certainly not uninfluenced by contemporary historical developments, lived a more studious and closeted life than did Mao; a life which afforded many years of pure reflection and thought, something denied Mao.³ Similarly, would it be necessary to construct a periodization for an interpretation of the philosophical thought of Kant? It would seem unlikely, especially as Kant appears to have lived a life of extreme regularity which afforded a high degree of constant and consistent introspection. In Mao's case, however, the argument for a periodization rests on both the dramatic changes in the development of a history in which he was intimately and centrally involved, and the fact that his writings reflect those changes.

It could be argued that the establishment of a periodization creates the potential danger that this methodological device will create such a sensitivity to change and difference across periods that these will be exaggerated in the interpretation which ensues; and the concomitant of this, that continuities will tend to be neglected. Such a danger should, however, only become manifest if the evidence of the texts is not strictly adhered to. The establishment of a

3. I am inclined to accept David McLellan's view that "Marx's intellectual development is a process of 'self-clarification' (to use his own expression), which cannot either be split into periods or treated as a monolith". See David McLellan (ed.), Marx's Grundrisse (London: Macmillan Press, 1980, second ed.), p. 15.

periodization does not deny the possibility of continuity, but it should permit a sensitivity to change and development.

In this study, four periods in Mao's intellectual development were analyzed. Has the study and the interpretation of the texts premised on this periodization provided any insights into the viability and validity of this methodological approach? Let us look firstly at the Yan'an period. In terms of Mao's position on historical causation, it would seem apparent that there was not a uniform consistency of approach throughout this period. As was demonstrated, several important texts penned prior to the appearance of On New Democracy (1940) indicated an approach rather different from that which eventually appears to have informed Mao's position on historical and social interpretation. If this is the case, is it still valid to insist that the Yan'an years actually do constitute a period in Mao's thought? While there were such differences, the important point remains that many of the pre-1940 texts (and this is especially so of On Contradiction and On the New Stage) were clearly premised on the desire to establish a rather more individual position on questions of theory, an approach which would allow a greater flexibility while appearing to remain within the confines of what was perceived as orthodox Marxism. As such, the pre-1940 writings must be seen in part as a logical precursor to the position arrived at in On New Democracy. This position allowed Mao to attribute a greater degree of causal effectivity to the realm of "politics" and thus to insist that Chinese society, as a particular historical instance, was potentially susceptible to judicious action brought to bear by the "political" realm; that, because the causally generative "basis" of society was constituted, not just of "economics", but of "economics" and "politics"

combined, the possibility for "politically"-inspired change existed, and Menshevizing appeals for caution owing to the backwardness of China's economy resisted by reference to the presence of "politics" within society's "basis". Thus, while differences exist between the texts of the earlier years of the Yan'an period and the On New Democracy formulation of 1940 (and utilized subsequently), these differences should not be interpreted as amounting to a difference of emphasis so great that the appearance of On New Democracy represents a break in the development of Mao's thought; rather, these earlier documents (with the possible exception of On One-Party Dictatorship, which is something of a special case) demonstrate an intellectual movement towards the position formulated in 1940. As such, these earlier documents and On New Democracy appear as part of a coherent intellectual process, and thus validly falling within the confines of a single period.

Moreover, the validity of defining the Yan'an years as a period in Mao's thought is enhanced by the textual integrity and consistency displayed by Mao's utilization, throughout these years, of the concept of an historical periodization of which the "three epoch" time-scale was an important element. This invocation of the "three epoch" periodization emerged very early in the texts of the Yan'an period, and appeared, either explicitly or in adumbrated form, right through to 1945. Similarly, Mao's approach to the "Sinification of Marxism" and the scientific investigation of history and social reality was consistent in the texts throughout this period. In the texts of the late 1930's, the documents of the Zhengfeng campaign (which lasted until 1944), and in Mao's reports to the Seventh Party Congress of 1945, there is a consistency of approach sufficient to deny the

possibility of a break in the development of Mao's thought based on an appeal to variability in those themes.

If we turn our attention to the years 1946-54, there is again evidence to suggest that they represent a period in Mao's thought. The texts of this period do not by and large provide any indication that, either before or after the events of 1949, Mao was overly preoccupied (as he had been during the Yan'an period) with weighty questions of theory. There is little that is theoretically innovative or substantive in the texts of this period. There is reason to suggest however that these years represent something of a transition or intermezzo between the intellectually fruitful endeavours of the Yan'an period, and the writings of the post-cooperativization period in which there is evidence of a renewed intellectual thrust motivated by the desire to formulate a specifically Chinese road to socialism.

Indeed, the texts of the 1955-64 period are extremely interesting, and moreover, indicative of a degree of consistency and logical coherence across several of the themes pursued in this study. For example, Mao's identification of the forces of production as the principal causal locus in historical causation, and his attribution to the forces of production of a capacity for limitless but unbalanced development, correlates exactly with Mao's refusal to perceive a point in the future at which society would come to rest in a finished state of perfection. These two elements of Mao's historical thought are thus logically related (and consistently so) throughout the post-cooperativization period. Indeed, the texts of this period give the strong impression of a degree of consistency and logical coherence greater even than the texts of the Yan'an period. While there are, of

course, some silences and contradictions in the texts, there is a general consistency which indicates that Mao had achieved a firmer and surer theoretical base from which to mount his analysis of history and society. This increased theoretical coherence of the post-1955 texts allowed, in the course of this study, the more ready reconstruction of a notional model of Mao's position on causation and time, this reconstruction relying less (as was more the case in analysis of the Yan'an documents) on seminal theoretical texts, and more on the evident parallels which occurred throughout the texts of the post-1955 period generally. It is hoped that this textual coherence is reflected in the reconstruction offered in Chapter Four.

This coherence in the texts begins to disintegrate, however, with the emergence of the Cultural Revolution themes in the mid-1960s. Various of these themes stand in marked contrast to those of the preceding period; this is especially so of the concept of a "peaceful evolution" from socialism to capitalism, and the radically diminished optimism which characterized Mao's vision of the future at this time. Moreover, the political events against which the Cultural Revolution documents were penned were significantly (one could argue, qualitatively) different from those of the preceding period. Consequently, both in terms of the historical background and the themes within the texts, there is evidence sufficient to establish the Cultural Revolution as a period in Mao's thought. The evidence of the texts does not, however, warrant the assumption that the Cultural Revolution stands out as the culmination of Mao's intellectual career, an essential distillation of the intellectual development which had preceded it. The evidence suggests rather that there was something of a departure from important themes of the pre-Cultural Revolution period; and in

terms of Mao's approach to Marxism, a deviation from a position held with some consistency over three decades.

The utilization of a periodization cautions against the formulation of generalized conclusions which do not take sufficient account of variations over time. Generalization is, however, justified for those themes or concepts which appear to have been employed with a degree of consistency across different periods. This study has unearthed several themes which were characterized (for the most part) by their continuity. This is particularly the case with Mao's approach to the "Sinification of Marxism". Mao had argued, in the late 1930s, that the universal laws of Marxism had to be utilized to disclose the specific "laws" of Chinese society and the Chinese revolution. Once disclosed, such specific "laws" became an integral component of a Sinified Marxism, for only through the combination of the universal truths of Marxism with such national particularities could Marxism cease to be a series of contentless abstractions and become a complete ideological system. While this formula for the "Sinification of Marxism" allowed an emphasis on Chinese particularities, it did not permit a claim to any cultural prerogative over Marxism. Consequently, Chinese Marxism, even where patently successful, could not be transplanted and mechanistically utilized in an alien social environment; for the Chinese aspects of Chinese Marxism (its specific "laws") precluded its necessary applicability elsewhere. Indeed, Mao explicitly discouraged such transplantation and utilization of the Chinese experience, for he was sensitive to the social and cultural limitations on Chinese Marxism. Marxism's universal truths were universally applicable; these could be shared; but not so the particularities of a Marxism which had

found national form. It is indeed not until the Cultural Revolution that there is any suggestion that Mao began to have second thoughts about the potential universality of the Chinese experience, and the documents of the Cultural Revolution provide evidence of a less circumspect estimation of the limits to the utilization of Chinese Marxism. Nevertheless, the formula for a "Sinified Marxism", worked out in the early years of the Yan'an period, continued for almost three decades as an important feature of Mao's approach to the "universal" theory of history he explicitly espoused.

Another feature of Mao's thought characterized by continuity was his position on the scientific procedure for the derivation of laws of nature, society and history. He consistently rejected a deductive approach to the investigation of social reality, arguing that laws and principles were (or should be) the end result of a process of study and investigation. Mao's explicitly enunciated approach was thus largely inductive, although he departed in important detail from the procedures of classical inductionism. This departure came in the form of Mao's insistence that it was possible to derive specific "laws" which described the regularities of a particular instance within a general category. Thus, it was possible, Mao contended, to formulate a specific "law" describing the regularities of a battle or particular society. Such "laws" need have no extrapolative value, for no assumption could be made as to the repeatability of the instance under investigation. Mao thus perceived a distinction between specific "laws", and general or universal laws which were abstract and devoid of any cultural or historical content which might limit their applicability. While there are significant problems with this position (how can universal laws be derived from unrepeatable specific "laws"?), it

allowed Mao to harmonize his stress on both the universal laws of Marxism and the defining regularities of particular historical instances. This emphasis on both the universal and the particular was thus made possible by the rather idiosyncratic philosophy of science which Mao adopted. There was thus a significant correlation between this approach to "law" derivation and Mao's position on the "Sinification of Marxism". It is therefore no coincidence that Mao's continued emphasis (into the 1955-64 period) on the integration of the universal laws of Marxism with the defining regularities of particular nations, was accompanied by a continued rejection of the deductive approach and a continued emphasis on formulating "laws" governing particular societies or historical instances. For these two elements of Mao's thought meshed in a relatively coherent manner; his philosophy of science allowing a harmonization of what may otherwise have been a contradictory emphasis on the universality of Marxism and the particularities of specific historical instances.

We have noted Mao's apparent deviation during the Cultural Revolution from the limitations imposed by him previously on a Sinified Marxism. It would not be surprising, because of the correlation just noted, to expect a movement in his approach to the derivation of laws of history and society. Unfortunately, the texts of the Cultural Revolution are almost silent on this theme; consequently we can only guess that this textual silence is indicative of his lessened faith in the position he had adopted in earlier periods.

There were, therefore, continuities in Mao's approach to important problem areas in his philosophy of history. There were, however, as this study had disclosed, significant areas of discontinuity and change. Let us look firstly at the problem of causation in history.

During the Yan'an period, there appeared some uncertainty prior

to the formulation of the On New Democracy position. Mao's utilization of the base/superstructure dichotomy in On Contradiction was not to be repeated during the Yan'an period, and it can only be concluded from this that the On Contradiction formulation did not present itself as overwhelmingly satisfactory to him. In particular, it is probable that Mao felt the need for a conceptual distinction between politics and culture, something the base/superstructure dichotomy did not appear to allow; for only through such a conceptual distinction could the role of politics be enhanced. The On New Democracy formulation appeared to achieve this; gone now is the discrete base/superstructure dichotomy, to be replaced by a tripartite conceptualization in which there is a clear distinction between "politics" and "culture". Moreover, Mao argued that the generative causal "basis" of society was constituted of a combination of "economics" and "politics"; it was this combination which was responsible for the nature and development of society's "culture". It also appears that Mao was prepared to allow that, within the interrelated ambit of society's "basis", that "politics" could assume causal dominance in the historical process. While "economics" was temporally and causally anterior to "politics", "politics" once created could take on a central role in "concentrating" and organizing the aspirations and actions of a class. This function of "concentration" was particularly evident, Mao believed, in the activities of political parties and government. However, certain historical actions, such as the elimination of classes, were beyond the capacity of "politics" to achieve; such a radical reconstruction of society had to await the passage of time and the successful resolution of the contradictions characterizing class society. Moreover, the ability of the "political" realm to achieve historical goals was

restrained by the interrelated character of society's "basis"; "politics" had to operate within the limiting thresholds established by society's economic structures and level of technological sophistication.

It is important to note that Mao did not, during the Yan'an period, attribute to "culture" dominance in historical causation; "culture" was "subordinate" to "politics". It could, however, play an important role in facilitating changes generated elsewhere. Similarly, Mao's attribution of a "principal and decisive" role to the superstructure in On Contradiction was carefully circumscribed by qualifications. Only in "historically particular situations" did the superstructure assume such a role, and then within the parameters anteriorly defined by its economic base.

During the post-cooperativization period, Mao's approach to causation in history was rather different from that articulated in On New Democracy. After 1955, Mao systematically utilized the concept of a "social system" constituted of the relations of production (ownership system, mutual relations, and distribution system) and the superstructure (the state, political parties, ideology). Excluded from this "social system" were the forces of production, the "material base" of society. The causation sequence was set in motion by the forces of production which were "the most revolutionary factor", and which had, Mao believed, a limitless capacity for development. The initial impetus for change established by the forces of production might be relatively diminutive, but nevertheless sufficient to establish major changes within the "social system" itself. Mao perceived the development of the forces of production as being impeded by the relations of production, and this impediment could

not be removed until conservative elements within the superstructure inhibiting change within the relations of production had been overcome. Society was thus characterized by its interrelatedness; changes and developments in one area dependent on related changes and developments elsewhere. Once the superstructural elements for change had prevailed, the resolution of the contradiction within the relations of production could be achieved in a manner which would then permit a "leap forward" in the development of the forces of production. Such a "leap forward" could not be sustained, however, and eventually the development of the forces of production would once again be retarded by elements resistant to change within the relations of production. The cycle would then renew itself; and the impression given by Mao is that this cycle was an endlessly recurring one, this as a result of the limitless capacity for development within the forces of production.

Once again, it is important to note Mao's position on the superstructure. While Mao certainly did not regard the influence of the superstructure as exiguous, he did not allow that the superstructure represented the primary locus in historical causation. It represented rather an arena in which forces for change and conservatism (created elsewhere) could achieve resolution. Moreover, the capacity of the superstructure to indefinitely inhibit the forward momentum of society was restricted by the tendency of society to advance, this being "the general trend". It would appear from the findings of this study, therefore, that greater caution is advised in the interpretation of Mao's position on the causal role of the superstructure. Not only did Mao rarely use the concept during the Yan'an period, his approach to its function during the post-1955 period does not betoken a

willingness to define it as the principal locus of historical causation. His perception of the superstructure during the post-1955 period was certainly complex, and the writings of the period indicate a preoccupation with it; however, such preoccupation should not be interpreted as a suggestion that it had become for Mao the dominant factor in initiating the cycle which constituted the historical process.

A word also needs to be said about Mao's stress on the human factor. Here again, secondary critiques of Mao's position frequently err in their failure to perceive that Mao was very sensitive to the various roles that human beings (indeed, individual humans) could play. Man was a vital factor in all areas of society; in the forces of production, man was represented *qua* labourer; in the relations of production, man was represented either as class member or as a member of a productive enterprise; and in the superstructure, in the area of "social relations of another kind", man was the bearer of ideology and a member of political organizations. And the important point is that the concatenating element which allowed impulses for change to be translated from one sector of society to another was man, the human factor. Consequently, Mao's emphasis on this human factor should not be interpreted as further evidence of his preoccupation with the superstructure, for each area of society was inhabited by man, who, in his various roles, was the factor responsible for the interrelated nature of society, and the factor allowing impulses for development and change to be transmitted throughout society.

Mao's views on causation in history thus indicate change and development over time, and the texts of the two "major" periods examined

in this study provide plentiful evidence of this theoretical shift. Similarly, there is an obvious shift in Mao's perception of historical time and the future. During the Yan'an period, Mao had utilized a dual periodization, one deriving from the Chinese tradition, the other from Marxism. The "three epoch" time-scale utilized peace as the principal criterion for temporal demarcation, while the five-stage orthodox Marxist periodization by and large utilized ownership and class factors. What is interesting about Mao's approach to the historical past was his perception of a degeneration from the first era of peace to the second era of war; historical time, rather than describing an ascending pattern of progress, passed through a lengthy trough during which the division of society into classes gave rise to seemingly unrelenting warfare. During the Yan'an period, Mao's vision of the future was heavily influenced by this "three epoch" periodization. The "dividing line" between the second epoch of war and the third epoch of perpetual peace had been achieved, and the battle then being waged was regarded by Mao as part of the last struggle before the epoch of perpetual peace would be attained. The realization of this epoch of perpetual peace was thus at hand, and it would seem that this eschatological theme in Mao's writings was a function of the violent and chaotic environment within which his ideas were formulated and found literary expression. This imminent expectation of a third epoch of perpetual peace was, however, to sit somewhat uncomfortably with the Marxist periodization he also espoused; for the final goal of social development was not imminently realizable according to the projections of this historical time-scale. China had not even entered socialist society, let alone nearing the establishment of the higher phase of communism.

The important point about Mao's vision of the future during the Yan'an period is that, whichever of the two historical periodizations he employed, the future still held out promise of achieving (either imminently or eventually) a settled state of society in which peace and harmony would prevail. This vision of the future is in stark contrast to that raised during the 1955-64 period. During this later period, the "three epoch" time-scale had disappeared from Mao's writings, and although he still invoked the orthodox Marxist periodization to categorize past history, the vision of the future which he espoused no longer incorporated the possibility of society achieving the final plateau at which struggle and contradiction would vanish to be replaced by tranquility, peace and harmony. Rather, the vision of the future raised during this period suggested continued struggle and contradiction without cessation, as society pursued its relentless odyssey through time, continually impelled by the limitless capacity for development of the forces of production. While Mao remained confident that a communist society would eventually be achieved, the realization of such a society would not witness the disappearance of struggle and contradiction; while such contradictions would no longer be of a class nature, contradictions there would be, and sufficient to impel society through its cyclical progression through time.

Here again, there is a clear distinction across periods in this important area of Mao's philosophy of history. And once again, this distinction reinforces the assumption that any serious study of Mao's thought must incorporate a sensitivity to the possibility of change.

As a final word, it needs to be pointed out that a great deal remains to be done in the analysis of Mao Zedong's literary heritage.

This study has attempted to present a textually-anchored interpretation of only four themes in Mao's thought. Many other areas of his philosophical, political, economic and historical thought remain in need of such textual analysis and interpretation. In the Introduction to this study, I commented that the textual study and analysis of the Mao documents is still in its infancy. There are reasons for this. Firstly, and most obviously, rigorous textual study can be rather onerous work, requiring close concentration. Moreover, the results from such textual analysis may not always (or even frequently) be dramatic. This is especially the case in the compilation of textual evidence of Mao's literary style. The numerical analysis of Mao's usage of certain words or grammatical structures, and the qualitative analysis of concepts and textual interpolations could, however, provide intrinsic evidence for the evaluation of texts where authorship or date of composition is in doubt. And only when there is a reasonable confidence as to the integrity (authorship, dating, revisions) of the texts cited, can there be any confidence in the generalizations drawn from those texts. Despite the problems involved, the establishment of such methodological devices and restrictions as textual analysis and periodization is of great importance, and this especially as Chinese evaluation of Mao's thought has, is, and may yet again undergo dramatic change. No doubt the judgement handed down by the Sixth Plenum in June 1981 will cause a shift in secondary analyses of Mao's thought; and while such major Chinese reassessments must be taken into account, it is necessary that the climate of Mao studies in the West not be dictated by current Chinese leadership. The only means of avoiding excessive political drift in this sensitive area of intellectual inquiry is to establish those theoretical and methodological

ground rules which will have a stabilizing influence, and prevent the sudden policy changes emanating from Beijing from having excessive influence.

As Mao and his times recede into the past, the foundations must be laid for future scholarly analysis of the Mao texts. It is hoped that the methodology and content of this interpretive essay will contribute, if only in a modest way, to this historically and politically important area of intellectual inquiry.

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格理斐大學亞洲研究專刊
グリフィス大学アジア研究論文集

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of the pre-liberation text

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SCHOOL OF MODERN ASIAN STUDIES

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1981

"The Marxist-Leninist classics not only need to have prefaces written, but also annotations."

Mao Zedong (1965)

INTRODUCTION

On Contradiction is possibly the most important document to have been written by Mao Zedong during his long literary and political career. The central concepts of this document---the ubiquity of contradictions, and the absoluteness of struggle between opposites---pervade and inform much of the political and philosophical writings of the Yan'an and post-Yan'an periods, and it is in On Contradiction that Mao first set out the intellectual framework for this view of the world.¹ Consequently, On Contradiction must be regarded as an intellectually generative work of key importance.

Until recently, no original text of On Contradiction had been available for comparison with the official text first published in 1952. This lack of an original text suggested to some observers that the Chinese may have been less than truthful in claiming that the essay had first been conceived and written as lectures delivered at the Anti-Japanese University in Yan'an in August 1937. Arthur Cohen, the most outspoken exponent of this view, argued in 1964 that "the Chinese claim appears to be fraudulent. There is considerable evidence for the view that neither On Practice nor On Contradiction was written in 1937, but rather in the period from 1950 to 1952...".² Likewise, Doolin and Golas, on the basis of an exhaustive bibliographical search, came to the conclusion that On Contradiction could not have been written in 1937 as the Chinese claimed.³ This view was not, however, accepted by either Stuart Schram⁴ or Karl Wittfogel;⁵ both accepted, on the basis of various evidence, the possibility that On Contradiction was written during the early Yan'an period as the Chinese have claimed. Nevertheless, it remained a fact that no original or pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction had come to light, and this absence of documentary proof served to frustrate the possibility of any final resolution of the debate over the dating of On Contradiction.

This unfortunate lacuna in the original texts of Mao's Yan'an writings was recently filled with the unearthing of a pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction by the Japanese scholar Takeuchi Minoru.⁶ I have published elsewhere a detailed textual study of this document, pointing out some of the differences which exist between the official and pre-Liberation versions of this essay; appended to that study were translations of sections of the pre-Liberation text which had been excised on its revision and republication in 1952.⁷ Lack of space in that source precluded a full translation of this pre-Liberation text. There is no doubt, however, that a complete translation of this important document is necessary, and this for the following reasons.

Firstly, it is important to be able to establish when Mao actually formulated important theoretical propositions. Mao was no ivory-tower historian or philosopher, and many of his essays and documents were written in response to challenges and changes in the immediate political environment; there was thus an intimate connection between the social and political environment and the development of his thought. Many secondary critiques of Mao's political thought tend to ignore this intimate connection and treat the documents which represent Mao's literary heritage as though they constitute some supra-temporal whole. In such an approach, documents from widely separated periods with highly differentiated historical and political backgrounds are treated as though produced in some form of historical vacuum. From this presumed unity of Mao's literary works are then derived interpretations of the "essential" Maoist view on a large variety of subjects.⁸ The danger of this approach is that important distinctions and variations which emerged in the development of Mao's intellect (often as a function of changes in the historical and political environment) tend to be disguised, and thus ignored; the emphasis on continuities leading to an unfortunate de-emphasis on discontinuities and variations. The existence of such discontinuities and variations was in fact real and substantial enough to suggest that the concept of an "essential" Mao should be abandoned in favour of an approach which

locates and anchors Mao and his writings historically; the "essential" Mao (often wrongly equated with the Mao of the Cultural Revolution) would in this approach be superseded by the Mao of the Yan'an period (1936-45), or the Mao of the post-cooperativization period (1955-64), and so on. Whatever periodization is utilized, this approach would constitute a significant methodological advance which might permit of fresh insights into an intellect which was developing as the environment within which it operated changed and developed.

However, if one is to utilize a periodization in Mao's thought, the problem of dating of texts assumes a more urgent quality; for if a periodization is to operate effectively, the texts utilized must be accurately dated so as not to give a possible distortion in any generalizations which might be formulated. Some scholars have shrugged off the debate over the dating of On Contradiction as unimportant⁹, or passed over it with nonchalant ease.¹⁰ Yet, where is On Contradiction to be placed historically? Is it to be assumed to be a product of the early Yan'an period, and analyzed accordingly, or is it to be assumed a product of the early post-Liberation period? If it is taken as being a composition of the Yan'an period, might we not be falsely anticipating by some fifteen years, important (indeed central) elements of Mao's thought which emerged only with Liberation; and if it is assumed to represent a composition of the early post-Liberation period, is there not the danger of underestimating Mao's capacity as a Marxist theoretician during the early years of the anti-Japanese War of Resistance? Even prior to the discovery of the pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction, it behoved Mao scholars to attempt some definition (through the medium of textual analysis) of the possible dating of the text published in 1952. Such textual analysis can, as Jerome Ch'en has demonstrated, contribute to the resolution of the question of authorship of certain disputed texts;¹¹ it could also, it is suggested here, be utilized in the quest to determine the date of composition where this is in dispute. Such textual analysis could involve both a comparison of the disputed text with other undisputed texts of the putative contemporaneous period, or involve a longitudinal comparison to disclose textual or substantive differences with texts of other periods. Such analysis could proceed along various dimensions; the comparison of linguistic usage (type of conjunctions used, frequency of certain adverbs, predilection for certain grammatical structures), the utilization of certain key words or phrases, the type of concepts formulated and their application, and the nature and background of textual interpolations such as quotations. The utilization of textual analysis along such dimensions cannot of itself provide absolute certainty with regard to questions of dating; it can, however, allow the analyst to make an educated and informed calculation on the basis of something more substantial than just circumstantial evidence.

With the discovery of the pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction, it has become possible for the first time to proceed to a detailed textual comparison of the official and unofficial texts to disclose both similarities and variations between texts. This sort of detailed comparison is also of importance if a periodization in Mao Zedong's thought is to be formulated and utilized effectively; for it allows the analyst to place accurately into periods sections of a text heavily revised prior to its later republication. This detailed comparison of texts has already been carried out for many of the pre-Liberation documents by the Japanese scholars working under the editorship of Takeuchi Minoru.¹² In the Mao Zedong Ji (Collected Works of Mao Zedong), these Japanese scholars have provided a variorum edition in Chinese of the texts indicating alterations and additions to the original texts on their official republication.¹³ The comparative pattern employed in the Mao Zedong Ji represents a model for such textual comparison, and it is the model which the following annotated translation of the pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction has largely followed. It has, however, required some adaptation, this being necessitated by the fact that it is not always possible to demonstrate in translation all of the variations of a minor literary character which appear in the Chinese; consequently, while every effort has been made to indicate variations between the texts where these occur, this has not always been possible in every single case.

A second reason for the necessity of a complete translation of the pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction derives from the extensive nature of the alterations and revisions which this text received on its republication in 1952. While it is clear from the Mao Zedong Ji that most of the pre-Liberation documents were revised prior to their official republication, the pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction was given a particularly heavy revision, and it was the subject of over three hundred alterations, excisions and additions, some of them quite extensive in character. This drastic revision was a function of two related factors; firstly, it is clear that Mao perceived On Contradiction as the jewel in his philosophical crown, and was determined that the official version should be as well written and as polished as possible; and secondly, the pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction can only be described even with some generosity as a rather rough piece of work, possibly reflecting its origins as hastily prepared lecture notes. It must be remembered that all of Mao's philosophical writings of the early Yan'an period, the Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism, On Practice and On Contradiction, probably originated as lectures at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yan'an. We know that Mao did not have access to an extensive library to assist him during this formative period in his intellectual career, and that even standard Marxist-Leninist classics were either unavailable or difficult to come by. T.A. Bisson has provided an interesting first-hand description of the environment within which these lectures may have first seen light of day, and he makes it clear that one of the difficulties facing Mao and his colleagues was this dearth of texts:

"....it must be noted that political subjects made up the large part of the curriculum (at the anti-Japanese University). These included study of the works of Marx and Lenin, and also of Stalin; history of the modern Chinese revolutionary movement, beginning with the Taiping Rebellion; political science and political economy; and philosophy, with emphasis on the dialectic...There were about 20 full-time instructors, with Mao and the other leaders evidently doing considerable lecturing. They were severely handicapped by a shortage of books, even to the works of Marx and Lenin. Little in the way of a library had survived the Long March....most of the text books were mimeographed." (14)

Under conditions such as these, it is little wonder that Mao was unable to produce the more carefully formulated and written document which represents the official text of On Contradiction.

However, although it might be true that the pre-Liberation text has been extensively revised on its republication in 1952, it still remains the case that the basic framework of On Contradiction is readily recognizable in this pre-Liberation document. The basic chapter format of the pre-Liberation text roughly parallels that of the official text, with one important exception; Chapter II of the pre-Liberation text, "The Law of Identity in Formal Logic and the Law of Contradiction in Dialectics", has been completely removed from the official text. We know from his recently published notes (dated September 1937) on Ai Siqi's Zhe-xue yu Sheng-huo (Philosophy and Life), that Mao was thinking and writing (during the period when On Contradiction was possibly first written) about the opposition between formal and dialectical logic. In these notes, Mao accuses formal logic of only recognizing the aspect of identity in a concept or thing, whereas dialectical logic could also perceive the other aspect---the lack of identity.¹⁵ Further on in the notes, Mao argues that formal logic is able to perceive things only at rest and in a static condition, and that it is a formalistic (gong-shi zhu-yi) type of thinking which is unable to resolve any problem whatsoever.¹⁶ Mao also describes formal logic's law of excluded middle, and declares that this law had already been subject to criticism by Hegel.¹⁷ It would appear then that there are evident parallels between these notes of 1937 and Chapter II of the pre-Liberation text of On Contradiction. Why then was it removed from the text on its republication in 1952? I have suggested elsewhere that the reason for this excision might be due to Mao's having relied heavily on other texts

(perhaps translations of Russian texts) in the formulation of this chapter.¹⁸ The extensive plagiarism in which Mao indulged in writing his Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism adds reinforcement to this suggestion.¹⁹ Another possible explanation for its excision is that Mao subsequently felt his attack on formal logic to be somewhat out of place in a general treatise on the ubiquity and characteristics of contradiction. Moreover, it would appear from other statements Mao has made subsequently about formal logic, that his opposition to it has not always been free of ambivalence. In his "Reading Notes" on the Soviet Manual of Political Economy (1961-2), Mao's opposition to formal logic emerged as implacable:

"Human knowledge always encounters appearances first. Proceeding from there, one searches out principles and laws. The text does the opposite. Its methodology is deductive, not analytical. According to formal logic, "People all will die. Mr. Chang is a person. Therefore Mr. Chang will die." This is a conclusion derived from the premise that all human beings die. This is the deductive method. For every question the text first gives definitions, which it then takes as a major premise and reasons from there, failing to understand that the major premise should be the result of researching a question. Not until one has gone through the concrete research can principles and laws be discovered and proved." (20)

What is important to note here is that Mao opposes formal logic because it was (in his mind) associated with a deductive approach to the problem of the attainment of knowledge. It is clear from the Yan'an and subsequent writings that Mao believed himself to be employing (in accordance with his reading of Marxist-Leninist convention) a basically inductive approach to the formulation of concepts, principles and laws.²¹ The fact that Mao appeared to be consciously operating under a general over-arching theory or world-view does not disqualify this interpretation;²² for the important point is that Mao accepted almost implicitly that such a world-view had also been constructed (by Marx and Lenin) in accordance with the conventions of inductionist procedure.

If we turn to Mao's speech at Hangzhou of December 1965, his attitude towards formal logic is not quite so dismissive:

"It has been said that the relationship of formal logic to dialectics is like the relationship between elementary mathematics and higher mathematics. This is a formulation which should be studied further. Formal logic is concerned with the form of thought, and is concerned to ensure that there is no contradiction between successive stages in an argument. It is a specialized science. Any kind of writing must make use of formal logic." (23)

It can be seen from just these two examples that Mao's attitude towards formal logic did undergo some variation in the space of just three or four years. Perhaps between 1937 and 1952, Mao's position on formal logic also fluctuated sufficiently for him to decide on excising his attack on formal logic from the text of On Contradiction on its republication.

Despite this major alteration to the pre-Liberation text, Mao had (in the pre-Liberation text) formulated the essential framework for his theory of contradictions. He discusses the universality and particularity of contradictions, identity and struggle of aspects of contradiction, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction, and the role of antagonism in contradiction. In short, when Mao turned his attention to the republication of On Contradiction in the early 1950's, it was largely a question of refurbishing an already existing theory, and not one of starting from scratch. For example, it is interesting to note that Mao had come to the conclusion in the pre-Liberation text that it was not philosophically possible to distinguish between a "difference" and a "contradiction", and he criticizes the Deborin school for creating such a distinction. He asserts, in some contrast to the contemporary Soviet line, that "even

under the conditions existing in the Soviet Union, the difference between the workers and peasants is a contradiction...".²⁴ In the official text, Mao has merely added the following clause to soften the impact of this assertion; "the workers and the peasants have established a firm alliance in the course of socialist construction and are gradually resolving this contradiction in the course of the advance from socialism to communism."²⁵ In his notes on Ai Sigi's Zhe-xue yu sheng-huo, Mao had also taken Ai to task for making the same distinction between "difference" and "contradiction". In words which almost parallel those in On Contradiction, Mao asserts that "differences are contradictions, are the so-called concrete contradictions."²⁶ In this instance, as in so many others, Mao merely had, on revising On Contradiction in 1952, to reword or refine theoretical premises formulated long before during the early years of the Yan'an period.

While the basic framework for Mao's theory of contradictions did exist in the pre-Liberation text, some of the sections added on republication are substantive and of significant theoretical importance, and indicate a further development in his approach to certain aspects of his theory. In one such addition to section V of the official text, Mao raises the important distinction between the two different states of motion in the development of a thing. During the first state in which change is only quantitative, the thing may appear to be in a state of "relative rest"; with the development of the thing, this state of "relative rest" gives way to a qualitative transformation, a state which Mao refers to as "conspicuous change."²⁷ In another interesting addition to section IV of the official text, Mao introduces the concept of the "new superseding the old", arguing that this represents a "general, eternal and inviolable law of the universe."²⁸

These additions are just the more evident examples of the many additions made to the pre-Liberation text on republication. What is important to note is that all of these many additions can be safely assumed to be a product, not of the Yan'an period, but of the early post-Liberation period. It is clear from a scrutiny of these additions that one of the motivations behind the extensive revision of the text was to make it more polemical in character. The original text contains no attacks on dogmatism, while the official text has seven sometimes lengthy criticisms of this ideological "deviation".²⁹ This indicates that Mao's original intention in writing On Contradiction was not to attack dogmatism (as the editorial commentary to the official text would have us believe)³⁰; it may well, however, have been Mao's intention on revising the text to retroactively build up his own image as a champion against dogmatism within the Party's ranks, and to more closely identify dogmatism with his defeated opponents within the Returned Students' Faction.

Within the official text of On Contradiction, we therefore find theoretical and analytical formulations and propositions from two fairly widely separated periods in Mao's intellectual development. In this regard, the official text represents something of a patch-work, and should not be treated historically as though a homogeneous document. Rather, it should be regarded as the product of two periods of intellectual endeavour; the early Yan'an period in which Mao first gained a reasonable familiarity with the concepts and elements of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and put together the basic framework for the theory of contradictions, and the early post-Liberation period during which time he expended considerable effort revising for official publication much of his previous literary output.

The translation

It is the purpose of the translation which follows to make as explicit as possible the points at which the pre-Liberation and official texts intersect and parallel each other, and where they diverge and differ. This has been achieved by two methods.

(1) The translation which follows is of the pre-Liberation text; points at which this text and the official text exactly parallel each other have been indicated by

the use of bold type, (for example, **the principal contradiction**). By this mechanism, it is evident at a glance which sections of the pre-Liberation text have been incorporated into the official text. At points where the two texts do exactly parallel each other, I have utilized without exception the official English translation. This was felt necessary so as to facilitate the more adequate comparison of the texts. Also, the official English translation is for the most part quite satisfactory, and little would have been gained by its alteration. The only alteration which has been made to the official translation is the employment of pin-yin to translate proper nouns.

(2) Points at which the pre-Liberation text have been revised or added to on republication as the official text, have been indicated by the use of annotations. These annotations basically take two forms; one to indicate a revision or rewording of the pre-Liberation text; the other to indicate a clear textual addition. Features of interest in the pre-Liberation text have also been commented on in the annotations.

By the use of these two methods, it is hoped that variations and similarities between the two texts will be immediately evident. In order to facilitate easy cross-reference between the texts, a comparative pagination is appended below. Page numbers in the official English translation refer to Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung (Peking: FLP, 1967), Vol. I; those in the official Chinese version refer to Mao Zedong Xuan Ji (Beijing: Ren-min chu-ban she, 1968), Vol. I.

<u>Official Text</u> (English)	<u>Official Text</u> (Chinese)	<u>pre-Liberation</u> Text
311	274-5	64-5
312	275	65-6
313	276-7	66-7
314	277-8	67-8
315	278-9	68
---	---	69
---	---	70
---	---	71
---	---	72
316	279-80	73-4
317	280-1	75
318	281-2	76-7
319	283	77-8
320	284	78-9
321	285-6	79
322	286	79-80
323	287-8	80-1
324	288	82
325	289-90	82-3
326	290	83-4
327	291	84
328	292	84-5
329-30	293-4	85-6
331	294-5	86-7
332	296	88-9
333	297	89-90
334	298	90-1
335	299-300	91-2
336	300-1	93-4
337	301-2	94-5
338	302-3	95-7
339	303-4	97-9
340	304-5	99, 101
---	---	100
341	305-6	101-2
342	306	103-4
343	307-8	104-7
344	308-9	107-8
345	309-10	109
346	311	110

Notes to the Introduction

* Grateful acknowledgement is made to Dr. C.L. Chiou of the University of Queensland who read and commented on an earlier draft of this paper.

- (1) "...the concept (of contradiction) is central to all his (Mao's) thinking about the problems and categories of Marxist dialectics." Stuart R. Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1969 revised ed.), p. 85.
- (2) Arthur A. Cohen, The Communism of Mao Tse-tung (University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, 1964), p.24; see also "How Original is Maoism?", Problems of Communism X, 6 (November-December 1961), pp.34-42.
- (3) "On Contradiction in the Light of Mao Tse-tung's Essay on Dialectical Materialism," China Quarterly 19 (July-September 1964), pp. 38-64.
- (4) Stuart R. Schram, "Mao Tse-tung as Marxist Dialectician," China Quarterly 29 (January-March 1967), pp.155-65; see also The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung, pp.84-88.
- (5) Karl A. Wittfogel, "Some Remarks on Mao's Handling of Concepts and Problems of Dialectics," Studies in Soviet Thought III, 4 (December 1963), pp.251-69.
- (6) The text appears in a volume entitled Bian-zheng-fa wei-wu lun (Dialectical Materialism) (Da-zhong shu-dian: Dalian, n.d.), pp.64-110. Takeuchi Minoru has also contributed to the debate over the dating of On Contradiction; see "Mo Takuto mujunron no genkei nitsuite" (The original form of Mao Zedong's "On Contradiction"), Shiso, April 1969.
- (7) Nick Knight, "Mao Zedong's On Contradiction and On Practice: Pre-Liberation Texts," China Quarterly 84 (December 1980), pp.641-668
- (8) See John Bryan Starr, Continuing the Revolution: the political thought of Mao (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1979), esp. pp.xi-xii; also Steve S.K. Chin, The Thought of Mao Tse-tung: Form and Content, trans. Alfred H.Y Lin (Centre of Asian Studies Papers and Monographs: Hong Kong, 1979), esp. p.204.
- (9) See, for example, James Chieh Hsiung, Ideology and Practice: The Evolution of Chinese Communism (Praeger Publishers: New York, 1970), pp.68-9
- (10) See, for example, Raymond Wylie, Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta, and the Conscious Creation of "Mao Tse-Tung's Thought" in the Chinese Communist Party, 1935-1945 (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London, 1976), p. 78.
- (11) Jerome Ch'en, Mao Papers: Anthology and Bibliography (Oxford University Press: London, 1970), pp.xiii-xxxi.
- (12) Takeuchi Minoru (ed.), Mao Zedong Ji (Collected Writings of Mao Zedong) (Hokubasha: Tokyo, 1970-2) I-X.
- (13) For a review of the Mao Zedong Ji by Stuart R. Schram, see China Quarterly 46 (April-June 1971), pp.368-9.
- (14) T.A. Bisson, Yenan in June 1937: Talks with the Communist Leaders (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1973), p.37. Emphasis added.

- (15) Zhong-guo zhe-xue (Chinese Philosophy) (San-lian shu-dian: n.p, August 1979) I, p. 26.
- (16) Ibid., p.28.
- (17) Ibid., p.29.
- (18) Knight, Op.cit., p. 649.
- (19) For details of this plagiarism, see Wittfogel, Op.cit.; also Stuart R. Schram, "Mao Tse-tung and the Theory of the Permanent Revolution," China Quarterly 46 (April-June 1971), p.223, esp. footnote 5.
- (20) Mao Tse-tung, A Critique of Soviet Economics, trans. Moss Roberts (Monthly Review Press: New York and London, 1977), p. 74.
- (21) See for example, Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung (FLP: Peking,1967) III, p.74.
- (22) See Benjamin Schwartz, "The Philosopher," in Dick Wilson (ed.), Mao Tse-tung in the Scales of History (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1977), p.29.
- (23) Stuart R. Schram (ed.), Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1974), p.240.
- (24) See below, p.77 of the pre-Liberation text.
- (25) See annotation (45) to the text.
- (26) Zhong-guo zhe-xue I, p. 29.
- (27) See annotation (237) to the text.
- (28) See annotation (169) to the text; also annotation (171).
- (29) See annotations (2), (32), (63), (71), (79), (90), (143).
- (30) Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung (FLP: Peking, 1967) I, p.311.

(p.64) The Principle of the Unity of Contradictions.

This law is the basic law of dialectics. Lenin said: "Dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradiction in the very essence of objects." Therefore, Lenin often called this law the essence (shi-zhi) of dialectics; he also called it the kernel of dialectics. Because of this, in our study of dialectics, discussion should commence from this problem, and moreover should receive somewhat closer attention than other problems.

This question includes many problems, and these are:

The two views of development;

the law of identity in formal logic and the law of contradiction in dialectics;

- (p.65) the universality of contradiction;
the particularity of contradiction;
the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction;
the identity and struggle of a contradiction;¹
the place of antagonism in contradiction.²

These problems will be explained in sequence below.

(1) The Two Views of Development.

Throughout the history of human thought (si-xiang),³ there have been two conceptions concerning the development of the world (shi-jie),⁴ the metaphysical view of development (fa-zhan guan),⁵ and the dialectical view of development. What are the differences between these two views of development?⁶

(1) The Metaphysical View of Development.⁷

Another name for metaphysics is xuan-xue, and this occupied a dominant position in the thought of former times. The content of this philosophy was an explanation of those things supposedly outside experience, that is, a theory which discussed absolutes and essences etc. In modern philosophy, so-called metaphysics is a method of thought which employs a static viewpoint to observe things, and which holds that all the different things in the world and all their characteristics have been forever unchanged. This type of thought prevailed in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe.

With the arrival of the present era, namely the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, because of the results of the class struggle and the development of science, dialectical thought (p.66) rapidly strode onto the world stage. But metaphysics, in the form also of vulgar evolutionism (vulgar, that is superficial, simple), stubbornly opposed dialectics.

In summary, the view of development of so-called metaphysics and vulgar evolutionism is that development is a quantitative increase or decrease, that the motive force is external, involves a change in place in all things, and that the reflection of these things in man's thought are eternally of this nature. The special characteristics of a thing are present in that thing from its beginning, and remain thus from its state of germination in inception right through to the zenith of its development. They ascribe social development to the growth and repetition of certain special characteristics, the nature of which remain forever unchanged. For example, capitalist exploitation and competition, individualism and so on, can all be found in ancient slave society or even in primitive savage society. They ascribe the causes of social development to factors external to society, such as geography and climate. This view of development searches⁸ outside a thing for the causes of its development, and opposes⁹ the theory which holds that development arises from the contradictions inside a thing; it can thus explain

neither the qualitative diversity of things, nor the phenomenon of one quality changing into another. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this mode of thinking existed as a theory of unchangeable natural absolutes¹⁰ (mechanical materialism)-----and in the twentieth century as vulgar evolutionism (the theory of equilibrium of Bukharin and others) and so on.¹¹

(2) The Dialectical View of Development.

This holds that in order to understand the development of a thing, we should study it internally and in its relationship with other things; in other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal, necessary and independent self-movement; that is, the automaticity of things.¹² The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing, hence its motion (p.67) and development.

Thus, the dialectical view of development combats the theory of external causes, or of an external motive force,¹³ advanced by metaphysics and vulgar evolutionism. It is evident that purely external causes can only give rise to mechanical motion, that is, to changes in scale or quantity, but cannot explain why things differ qualitatively in thousands of ways.¹⁴ As a matter of fact, even mechanical motion under external force occurs through the internal contradictoriness of things. Simple growth in plants and animals is not only quantitative increase, it is at the same time the emergence of qualitative change; simple growth is likewise¹⁵ the result of development arising from contradictions. Similarly, social development is due chiefly not to external but to internal causes. Countries with almost the same geographical and climatic conditions display great diversity and unevenness in their development. Moreover, great social changes may take place in one and the same country although its geography and climate remain unchanged, and this condition exists in many countries around the globe. Old Russian imperialism¹⁶ changed into the socialist Soviet Union, and a purely feudal Japan, which had locked its doors against the world, changed into imperialist Japan, although no change occurred in the geography and climate of either country. Change was extremely limited in China with its several thousand year old feudal system, but recently there have been great changes, and is just now changing into a new China, liberated and free. Is it conceivable there are any differences between the geography and climate of China today and of several decades ago? It is quite evident, it is not due to external reasons but to internal reasons.¹⁷ Changes¹⁸ in nature are due chiefly to the development of the contradictions within things in nature. Changes in society are due¹⁹ to the development of the internal contradictions in society, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, and the contradiction between classes,²⁰ and it is these that push society forward.²¹ Does dialectics²² exclude external causes? Not at all. The external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, the external causes become operative through internal causes. In a suitable temperature an egg changes into a chicken, but no temperature can change a stone into a chicken, because the basis of the internal causes is different. (p.68) The pressure of imperialism accelerated change in Chinese society, and these changes were effected through the inner regularities (*gui-lü-xing*) of China itself. In battle, one army is victorious and the other is defeated; both the victory and the defeat are determined by internal causes. The one is victorious either because it is strong or because of its competent generalship, the other is vanquished either because it is weak or because of its incompetent generalship; it is through internal causes that external causes bring about change.²³ In 1927,²⁴ the defeat of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie came about through the opportunism then to be found within the Chinese proletariat itself (inside the Chinese Communist Party).²⁵ To lead a revolution to victory a class or a political party must rely on its own political line having no mistakes,²⁶ and on the solidity of its own political organization. In

China, the loss of Manchuria and the crisis in North China are due principally to China's weakness (because of the defeat of the 1927 revolution, the people lost political power, and this produced civil war and a dictatorial system). Japanese imperialism took advantage of this situation and invaded. In order to drive out the Japanese robbers, we must rely principally on the national united front to carry out a determined revolutionary war. "Only after something has first become rotten will worms breed in it; and only after a man first doubts will malicious talk make its entry." This is a saying by Su Dongpo.²⁷ "When internal examination discovers nothing wrong, what is there to be anxious about, what is there to fear?"²⁸ This is a Confucian truth. If a person strengthens himself in his youth, he doesn't easily catch cold; the Soviet Union to this day has not suffered attack by Japan, and this is due completely to its strength. "When Lei Gong beat the bean curd, he chose a weak object to bully."²⁹ Things under heaven depend solely on one's strength, so it is no use blaming heaven or other people; man is the master of his own fate, difficulties can be overcome, and external conditions can be changed; this is our philosophy.

We oppose the metaphysical view of development, and advocate the dialectical view of development. We are advocates of the theory of change, and oppose the theory of non-changeability;³⁰ we are advocates of the theory of internal causation, and oppose the theory of external causation.

II. The Law of Identity in Formal Logic and the Law of Contradiction in Dialectics.

(p.69)

We have discussed above the metaphysical and dialectical views of development. The struggle between these two ways of looking at the world constitutes the struggle in methods of thought between formal logic and dialectical logic.

Bourgeois formal logic has three fundamental laws: the first is called the law of identity, the second the law of contradiction, and the third the law of excluded middle. What is the law of identity? The law of identity states: In the process of thought, a concept remains unchanged throughout, being forever equal to itself. For example, a chemical element is forever equal to that chemical element; China is forever equal to China, and a certain person is forever equal to that certain person. Its formula is $A = A$; this law is metaphysical. Engels says that it is the fundamental law of the old view of the universe. Its mistake lies in not recognizing contradiction and change within a thing, and because of this, removing temporariness and relativity from a concept, attributing it with permanence and absoluteness. It doesn't understand that a thing and the concept that reflects a thing are both relative and changeable; a certain chemical element is certainly not forever equal to that certain element, and all forms of chemical element are changing. China also will not forever be equivalent to China, for China is changing; the age-old feudal China of the past and the free and liberated China of the future are two things. A certain person is also not forever equal to that certain person; a person's physique and thought change. Concepts in thought are reflections of objective things, and objective things are changing; the content of a concept is also changing. In fact, there is no such thing as a concept which is forever equivalent to itself.

What is the law of contradiction? The law of contradiction states: A concept itself cannot at the same time contain two or more mutually contradictory meanings, and if a certain concept contains two contradictory meanings, then that is regarded as a logical error. A contradictory concept cannot simultaneously have both sides correct or both sides incorrect, and the correct one is, and can only be, one of those two. Its formula is $A \neq \text{not-}A$. Kant has enumerated the four following antinomies (mao-dun si-xiang):³¹ (p.70) The world's time has a beginning and an end, and is limited in space; the world has no beginning or end in time, and also is limitless in space. This is the first of them. In the world everything is constituted of simple matter (cannot be re-divided); in the world there are no simple things, everything is complex (can be re-divided). This is the second of them. In the world there exists free causation; in the world there is no freedom, everything is inevitable. This is the third of them. In the world there exists a certain inevitable essence (bi-ran de shi-zhi); in the world nothing is inevitable, everything is accidental. This is the fourth of them. Kant gave these irreconcilable and mutually opposed principles the one title of "The Second Law of Contradiction". However, he stated that these were only contradictions in man's thought, in the real world they really did not exist. According to the law of contradiction in formal logic, these contradictions were thus a mistake, and had to be rejected. However, in reality, thought is a reflection of things. There is not one thing which does not contain contradiction, and because of this, there is no concept which does not contain contradiction. This is not an error in thought, but precisely where thought is correct, and the law of the unity of contradictions of dialectical logic is founded on this base. It is only with formal logic's rejection of the contradictory law of contradiction that it becomes really incorrect thought. The law of contradiction in formal logic is only a manifestation of the negative of the law of identity, and it functions as a supplement to the law of identity, the purpose of which is to consolidate the law of identity's so-called a concept is equal to itself, $A = A$.

What is the law of excluded middle? The law of excluded middle states: Of the two opposite meanings of a concept, the correct one must be one or the other, for it is not possible for both to be incorrect, or to rush to a third as the correct meaning. Its formula is "A is equal to B, or not equal to B, but cannot be equal to C." They do not realize that things and concepts are developing, and in the process of development of things and concepts, not only are their internal contradictory elements made manifest, but these contradictory elements can be removed, negated and resolved to become a third thing (p.71) which is not-A and not-B, change to become a new and higher thing or concept. Correct thought should not exclude the third factor, should not exclude the law of the negation of the negation. According to the law of the excluded middle, in the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the correct one is either the former or the latter. It cannot be a society without classes. However, it is a fine thing that the process of social evolution does not stop at class struggle, but progresses towards a proletarian society. China and Japanese imperialism are in a state of contradiction. We oppose the invasion of Japanese imperialism, but we do not agree that a post-independence China must remain forever in a state of hostility with Japan. We advocate that through national revolution and a revolution within Japan, the two nations will reach a stage of free association. The same applies to the opposition between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy; a higher stage to both of them will be the epoch in which there will be no states and no governments, and this will be arrived at through proletarian democracy. The law of excluded middle in formal logic also supplements its law of identity, which only recognizes the fixed condition of a concept, and which opposes its development, opposes revolutionary leaps, and opposes the principle of the negation of the negation.

It can, therefore, be seen that all the laws of formal logic oppose contradictoriness and advocate the characteristic of identity, oppose development and change of concepts and things, and advocate their solidification and immobility. This is in direct opposition to dialectics.

Why do formal logicians advocate these things? Because they observe things separate from their continual mutual function and interconnections; that is, they observe things at rest rather than in movement, and as separate rather than in connection. Therefore it is not possible for them to consider and acknowledge the importance of contradictoriness and the negation of the negation within things and concepts, and so they advocate the rigid and inflexible law of identity.

(p.72) Dialectics on the other hand observes things in movement and in connection, and is in direct opposition to the law of identity of formal logic, advocating rather the revolutionary law of contradiction.

Dialectics considers that the contradictions in thought are none other than the reflection of objective external contradictions. Dialectics does not ritualistically adhere to two principles which appear externally to be in a state of mutual conflict (for example, the many antinomies raised by Kant in his four contradictory principles and to which I referred above), but sees through to a thing's internal essence. The task of dialecticians is to perform the task that those formal logicians have not carried out---study of an object---to concentrate attention on finding out the strength of its contradictions, the tendency of the contradictions, the aspects of the contradictions, and the fixity of the contradictions' internal relations. The external world and man's thought are both in motion and are dialectical; they are not static and metaphysical. For this reason, the revolutionary law of contradiction (namely the principle of the unity of contradictions) therefore occupies the principal position in dialectics.

The entirety of formal logic has only one nucleus, and that is the reactionary law of identity. The entirety of dialectics also has only one nucleus, and that is the revolutionary law of contradiction.

Does dialectics oppose the identity of things or concepts? It does not. Dialectics recognizes the relative identity of things or concepts. Why then does dialectics oppose the law of identity of formal logic? It is because the law of identity of formal logic is an absolute law which rejects contradictions. Dialectics acknowledges the identity of things or concepts, but asserts that they simultaneously contain contradictions and are interconnected; this kind of identity indicates the interconnection of contradictions, it is relative and temporary. Since the law of identity of formal logic is an absolute law which rejects contradictions, it cannot but advance the law of excluded middle which opposes one concept changing into another concept, or one thing changing into another thing. (p.73) Dialectics on the other hand regards the identity of a thing or concept as temporary, relative and conditional; because the struggle of contradictions guides the regularities (gui-lü-xing) of change and development of a thing or a concept, such struggle is forever absolute and unconditional. Because formal logic does not reflect a thing in its true condition, dialectics cannot allow its existence. There is only one scientific truth, and that truth is dialectics.

III. The Universality of Contradiction

This problem has two aspects, the first part of which is that contradiction exists in all processes; the second is that in every process the movement of contradiction exists from start to finish. This is called the universality or absoluteness of contradiction.³²

Engels said "motion itself is a contradiction." Lenin defined the law of the unity of opposites (mao-dun tong-yi) as "the recognition (discovery) of the mutually exclusive opposite tendencies in all natural phenomena and processes (including society and mind)." Are these ideas correct? Yes, they are. The interdependence of the contradictory aspects present in all things and the struggle between aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward. Without contradiction nothing would exist.³³ As a result, this law is the most universal law, applicable to all phenomena of the objective world, and also applicable to the phenomenon of thought (si-xiang). Within dialectics, it is the most fundamental law having decisive significance.

Why do we say that contradiction is motion? Haven't there been those who have disputed Engels' assertion? This is because the theory of contradiction discussed by Marx, Engels and Lenin has become the most important theoretical base of the proletarian revolution. This has led to all-out attacks by bourgeois theorists (p.74) who constantly hope to overturn Engel's law that "motion is contradiction". Raising aloft their obstreperous refutations they have moreover produced the following reasons: the motion of things in the real world is in different instances of time, and through different points in space; when a thing is positioned at a certain point, it occupies that point, and when it moves to another point it occupies that other point. In this way, the motion of things in time and space is divided into many sections; there are no contradictions, for if there were contradictions there could be no movement.

Lenin has pointed out the absurdity of this reasoning, pointed out that this reasoning in fact, by observing continual motion as many sections in time and space and as many static conditions, results in denying motion. They do not know that when a thing occupies a new position, it is because the thing has moved in space from one point to another; namely, as a result of motion. Without the contradiction in so-called motion in which a thing occupies a point and at the same time does not occupy a point, and without this continuous and interrupted unity, the unity of motion and rest, inaction and action, motion would be fundamentally impossible. To deny contradiction is to deny motion. All

motion in nature, society and thought! is this motion of the unity of contradictions.

Ceaseless contradiction is the basis of the simple forms of motion (for instance, the mechanical motion discussed above) and is moreover the basis of all complex forms of motion.

There is an indivisible relationship between the process of life and the opposing process of death, and this regardless of whether it is in the various forms of organic life, or within the life of cells within an organism. The supersession of the old by the new, the succession of life and death---this motion of the unity of opposites (mao-dun tong-yi) is the (p.75) necessary condition for all organic life and development. Without this contradiction, the phenomenon of life is unthinkable.³⁴

Within mechanics, any "action" contains internal contradictoriness, and leads to "reaction"; without "reaction", there could be no discussion of action.³⁵

In mathematics, any number contains internal contradictoriness, and can become a positive or negative number, a whole number or a fraction. Positive and negative, whole number and fraction, constitute the movement of contradictions within mathematics.

The law of the unity of opposites (mao-dun tong-yi) of dissociation and combination in chemistry, constitutes the countless motion of chemical change; without this contradiction, chemical phenomena could not exist.

In social life, any phenomenon contains class contradictions. The buying and selling of labour, the organization of the state, and the content of philosophy are like this. The fundamental law of class society is class struggle.

In war, offence and defence, advance and retreat, victory and defeat are all contradictory phenomena. One cannot exist without the other. The two aspects are at once in conflict and in interdependence, and this constitutes the totality of war, and pushes its development forward.³⁶

Every difference in men's concepts should be regarded as reflecting an objective contradiction. Objective contradictions are reflected in subjective thinking, and this process constitutes the contradictory movement of concepts, and pushes forward the development of thought.³⁷

Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes in society. If there were no contradictions in the Party and no ideological struggles to resolve them, the Party's life would come to an end.

(p.76) Contradiction³⁸ exists universally and in all processes, whether in the simple or in the complex forms of motion, whether in objective phenomena or ideological phenomena.

At this point there are those who say although they can admit the principle of Engels and Lenin that contradiction is motion, and that contradiction exists in all processes, isn't it unnecessary for the movement of contradictions within all processes to exist from beginning to end?³⁹ Was it not Deborin and others who clearly asserted that there is no such thing as the so-called motion of contradictions from beginning to end in every process? According to Deborin, contradictions exist, but not at the inception of a process but only when it has developed to a certain stage.⁴⁰ According to Deborin, the development of a process follows on from this stage; at its inception there are simple differences. There subsequently emerge opposites which finally become contradictions. Is this formula correct or mistaken?

It is mistaken. The so-called universality of contradictions exists not only within all processes, but at each stage of development of every process. This is the revolutionary law of contradictions of Marxism. According to the Deborin school,⁴¹ contradiction appears not at the inception of a process, but only when it has developed to a certain stage: if this were the case, then the cause of the development of the process before that stage would be external and not internal. Deborin thus reverts to the metaphysical theories of external causality and of mechanism. Applying this view in the analysis of concrete problems, the Deborin school sees only differences but not contradictions between the workers and the peasants⁴² under existing conditions in the Soviet Union, thus entirely agreeing with Bukharin. In analyzing the French Revolution, it holds that before the Revolution there were likewise only differences but not contradictions within the Third Estate, which was composed of the workers, the peasants and the bourgeoisie (Gorev's explanation).⁴³ This school does not understand that each and every difference (p. 77) already contains contradiction and that difference itself is contradiction. Labour and capital have been in contradiction ever since the two classes came into being, only at first the contradiction had not become intense. Even under the conditions⁴⁴ existing in the Soviet Union, the difference between workers and peasants is a contradiction, although, unlike the contradiction between labour and capital, it will not become intensified into antagonism or assume the form of class struggle.⁴⁵ The question is one of different kinds of contradiction, not of the presence or absence of contradiction. Contradiction is universal and absolute, it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end.⁴⁶ What is meant by the emergence of a new process? The old unity with its constituent opposites yields to a new unity with its constituent opposites; a new process emerges to replace the old.⁴⁷ The new process contains new contradictions and begins its own history of the development of contradictions.

As Lenin pointed out, Marx in his Capital made a model application⁴⁸ of this principle of the movement of opposites which runs through a process⁴⁹ from beginning to end. He pointed out that this is the method which must be employed in studying any process.⁵⁰

"In his Capital, Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday relation of bourgeoisie (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz. the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals all the contradictions (or the germs of all the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development (both growth and movement) of these contradictions and of this society in the Σ (summation) of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end."⁵¹

Lenin added, "Such must be the method of exposition (or study) of dialectics in general."

(p. 78) Fine, we don't need to study the ancient literary method (yi-fa) of the Tong Cheng school,⁵² for Lenin has informed us of an even better method (yi-fa), and that is the Marxist scientific method of study.⁵³

IV. The Particularity of Contradiction.

Contradiction is present in all processes;⁵⁴ it permeates each and every process from beginning to end.⁵⁵ This is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction which we have discussed above. Now let us discuss the particularity and relativity of contradiction.⁵⁶ This problem should be studied on several levels.

First, the contradiction in each form of motion of matter has its particularity. Man's knowledge of matter is knowledge of its forms of motion, because there is nothing in this world except matter in motion.⁵⁷ In considering each form of motion, we must observe the points which it has in common with other forms of motion. But what is especially important, constituting as it does the foundation of our knowledge of a thing, is to observe what is particular to this form of motion of matter, namely, to observe the qualitative difference between this form of motion and other forms. Only when we have done so can we distinguish between things. Materialist dialectics indicates clearly: Every form of motion contains within itself its own particular contradiction. This particular contradiction constitutes the particular essence which distinguishes one thing from another.⁵⁸ There are many forms of motion in nature, mechanical motion, sound, light, heat, electricity, dissociation, combination, and so on. All these forms are interdependent, but in its essence each is different from the others. The particular essence of each form of motion is determined by its own particular contradiction. This holds true not only for nature but also for social and ideological phenomena. Every form of society, every form of ideology, has its own particular contradiction and particular essence.

The sciences are differentiated precisely on the basis of the particular contradictions inherent in their respective objects of study. Thus the contradiction peculiar to a certain field of (p.79) phenomena constitutes the object of study for a specific branch of science. For example, positive and negative numbers in mathematics; action and reaction in mechanics; positive and negative electricity in physics; dissociation and combination in chemistry; forces of production and relations of production, and class struggle, in social science;⁵⁹ offence and defence in military science; idealism and materialism, the metaphysical outlook and the dialectical outlook, in philosophy; and so on---all these are the objects of study of different branches of science precisely because each branch has its own particular contradiction and particular essence. Of course, unless we study⁶⁰ the universality of contradiction, we have no way of discovering the universal cause⁶¹ for the movement or development of things; however, unless we study the particularity of contradiction, we have no way of determining the particular essence of a thing which differentiates it from other things, no way of discovering the particular cause⁶² for the movement or development of a thing, and no way of distinguishing one thing from another or of demarcating the fields of science.⁶³

It is necessary not only to study the particular contradiction and the essence determined thereby of every great system of the forms of motion of matter, but also to study the particular contradiction and the essence of each process in the long course of development of each form of motion of matter. In every form of motion, each process of development⁶⁴ is qualitatively different; in the entire world (tian-xia) there are no identical contradictions, and our study must emphasize⁶⁵ this point.

Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods. For instance, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the method of socialist revolution; the contradiction between the colonies and imperialism is resolved by national⁶⁶ war; the contradiction between the great masses of the people and the feudal system is resolved by the method of democratic revolution;⁶⁷ the contradiction between the proletariat⁶⁸ and the peasantry⁶⁹ is resolved by the socialization of agriculture; contradiction within the Communist Party, is resolved

by the method of ideological struggle;⁷⁰ the contradiction between society and nature is resolved by the method of developing the productive forces. Processes change, old processes and old contradictions disappear, new processes and new contradictions emerge, and the methods of resolving contradictions differ accordingly. (p.80) In Russia, there was a fundamental difference between the method used for resolving the contradiction resolved by the February Revolution and the contradiction resolved by the October Revolution.⁷¹ It is a principle to use different methods to cope with different contradictions.

In order to reveal the particularity of the contradiction in any process,⁷² in their totality or interconnections, that is in order to reveal the essence of the process, it is necessary to reveal the particularity of the two aspects of each of the contradictions in that process; otherwise it will be impossible to discover the essence of the process. This requires the utmost attention in the study of problems.⁷³

A major process contains many contradictions.⁷⁴ For instance, in the course of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, where the contradictions are exceedingly complex, there exist the contradiction between imperialism and the entire Chinese society, the contradiction within Chinese society between the feudal system and the great masses of the people, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the contradiction between the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie⁷⁵ on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other, the contradiction between the various ruling groups,⁷⁶ and so on. These contradictions cannot be treated in the same way since each has its own particularity; moreover, the two aspects of each contradiction cannot be treated in the same way since each aspect has its own characteristics. We who are engaged in the Chinese revolution should not only understand the particularity of these contradictions in their totality, that is, in their interconnections, but should also study the two aspects of each contradiction as the only means of understanding the totality. When we speak of understanding each aspect of a contradiction, we mean understanding what specific position each aspect occupies, what concrete forms it assumes in its interdependence⁷⁷ with its opposite, and what concrete methods are employed in the struggle with its opposite, when the two are both interdependent,⁷⁸ and also after the interdependence breaks down. It is of great importance to study these problems. The principal feature of Leninism is that it is the science which studies the various forms of struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.⁷⁹

(p.81) In studying a problem we must shun subjectivity, one-sidedness and superficiality. To be subjective means not to look at problems objectively, that is, not to use the materialist viewpoint in looking at problems. This has already been discussed in Chapter Two, and I will return to it at the end of this section. Now I come to a discussion of one-sidedness and superficiality.⁸⁰ To be one-sided means not to look at problems all-sidedly, for example, to understand only China but not Japan, only the Communist Party but not the Guomindang, only the proletariat but not the bourgeoisie, only the peasants but not the landlords, only the favourable conditions but not the difficult ones, only the gentleman but not the scoundrel, only the present but not the future,⁸¹ only oneself but not others, only pride but not modesty,⁸² only the defects but not the achievements, only the plaintiff's case but not the defendant's, only underground⁸³ work but not open⁸⁴ work, and so on. In a word, it means not to understand the characteristics of both aspects of a contradiction. That is what we mean by looking at a problem one-sidedly. Or it may be called seeing the part but not the whole.⁸⁵ That way it is impossible to find the method for resolving a contradiction, it is impossible to accomplish the tasks of the revolution, to carry out assignments or to develop inner-Party ideological struggle correctly. When Sun Wu Zi said in discussing military science, "Know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat", he was referring to the two sides in a battle. Tang Taizong⁸⁶ also understood the error of one-sidedness when he said, "Listen to both sides and you will be enlightened,

heed only one side and you will be benighted." But our comrades often look at problems one-sidedly, and so they often run into snags. In the countryside, if two families or clans are engaged in conflict, the mediator must recognize the reasons for the conflict on both sides, the bone of contention, the present situation, demands, and so on; only then will he be able to think out a method of resolving the dispute. There are such people in the countryside who are good at mediation, and they are constantly invited to mediate when a dispute arises; these people actually understand the dialectic of which we speak, the need to understand the particular characteristics of the various aspects of a contradiction. (p.82)

In the novel Shui Hu Zhuan, Song Gongming⁸⁷ thrice attacked the Zhu village. Twice he was defeated because he was ignorant of the local conditions and used the wrong method. Later he changed his method; first he investigated the situation, and he familiarized himself with the maze of roads, then he broke up the alliance between the Li, Hu, and Zhu villages and sent his men in disguise into the enemy camp to lie in wait.⁸⁸ And on the third occasion he won. There are many examples of materialist dialectics in Shui Hu Zhuan, of which the episode of the three attacks on Zhu Village is one of the best. On several occasions Lenin spoke of the need to observe a problem from all sides, resolutely opposing one-sidedness.⁸⁹ We should remember his words. To be superficial means to consider neither the characteristics of a contradiction in its totality nor the characteristics of each of its aspects; it means to deny the necessity for probing deeply into a thing and minutely studying the characteristics of its contradiction, but instead merely to look from afar and, after glimpsing the rough outline, immediately to try to resolve the contradiction (to answer a question, settle a dispute, handle work, or direct a military operation). This way of doing things is bound to lead to trouble.⁹⁰

Not only does the whole process of the movement of opposites,⁹¹ both in their interconnections and in each of the aspects, have particular features to which we should give attention, but each stage in the process has its particular features to which we must give attention too.⁹² The fundamental contradiction in a process⁹³ and the essence of the process determined by this fundamental contradiction will not disappear until the process is completed; but the conditions usually differ at each stage of development of a process.⁹⁴ The reason is that, although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in a process⁹⁵ and the essence of the process remain unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified as it passes from one stage to another.⁹⁶ In addition, among the numerous major and minor contradictions which are determined⁹⁷ by the fundamental contradiction, some become intensified, some are temporarily or partially resolved or mitigated, and some new ones emerge; hence the process is marked by stages.⁹⁸

For instance, when imperialism differed from non-monopoly capitalism,⁹⁹ there was no change in the¹⁰⁰ nature of the two classes in fundamental contradiction, namely, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or in the capitalist essence of society; however, the contradiction between these two classes became intensified, the contradiction between monopoly and non-monopoly capital emerged (p.83), the contradiction between the various monopoly cliques emerged, the contradiction between the export of capital and the export of commodities emerged, the contradiction between the colonial powers and the colonies became intensified, the contradiction among the capitalist countries resulting from their uneven development intensified,¹⁰¹ and thus arose the special stage of imperialism.¹⁰²

Take the process of China's democratic revolution,¹⁰³ which began with the Revolution of 1911; it, too, has several distinct stages.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps there are still several stages through which it must pass before this revolution will be completed. Although no change has taken place in the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process as a whole, i.e., in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic-revolutionary nature of the process (the opposite of which is its semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature), China has nonetheless¹⁰⁵ passed through four or five¹⁰⁶ stages of development in the course of more than twenty years; during this time many great events have taken place---the failure of the Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of the regime of the Northern

Warlords, the formation of the first national united front and the great revolution,¹⁰⁷ the break-up of the united front and the desertion of the bourgeoisie to the side of the counter-revolution, the wars among the warlords,¹⁰⁸ the war of the Soviets,¹⁰⁹ the loss of Manchuria, the ending of the war of the Soviets, the transformation of the Guomindang policy, the establishment of the second united front,¹¹⁰ and so on. These stages are marked by particular features such as the intensification of certain contradictions (e.g., the contradiction between China and Japan,¹¹¹ the partial or temporary resolution of other contradictions (e.g., the destruction of the Northern Warlords and the confiscation of the land of the landlords in the Soviet areas), and the emergence of yet other contradictions (e.g., the conflicts among the new warlords, and the landlords' recapture of the land after the loss of the Soviet areas.¹¹²

In studying the particularities of the contradictions at each stage in a process,¹¹³ we not only observe¹¹⁴ them in their interconnections or their totality, but also observe the two aspects.¹¹⁵

For instance, consider the Guomindang and the Communist Party. In the period of the first united front, the Guomindang¹¹⁶ was revolutionary and vigorous, and it was an alliance of various classes for the democratic revolution. (p.84) After 1927, it changed into its opposite.¹¹⁷ After the Xian Incident, it began to change in the direction of a new phase.¹¹⁸ Such have been the particular features of the Guomindang in the three stages. Of course, these features have arisen from a variety of causes. Now take the other aspect, the Communist Party.¹¹⁹ In the period of the first united front, the Chinese Communist Party was in its infancy; it led the First Great Revolution¹²⁰ but revealed its immaturity in its understanding of the character, the tasks and the methods etc. of the revolution. Because of this Chen Duxiuism emerged.¹²¹ After 1927, the Communist Party led the war of the Soviets, steeling itself in this struggle with its international and internal enemies, and established the Soviets and the Red Army;¹²² however, it committed political and military errors.¹²³ Since 1935, the Party has¹²⁴ again been leading a new united front,¹²⁵ and has raised the slogan of anti-Japanese national war and a democratic republic. These have been the particular features of the Communist Party during one stage. These features, too, have arisen from a variety of causes. Without studying both these sets of features we cannot understand the particular relations between the two parties during the various stages of their development, namely, the united front,¹²⁶ the break-up of the united front, and a further united front.¹²⁷ What is even more fundamental¹²⁸ than the relations between the two parties is the resultant contradictions which have arisen between each party and other forces.¹²⁹ For instance,¹³⁰ the Guomindang stood in contradiction to foreign imperialism¹³¹ (sometimes adopting compromise), and in contradiction to the great masses of the people within the country.¹³² The Communist Party has stood in contradiction with foreign imperialism,¹³³ and in contradiction to internal exploiting classes.¹³⁴ Because of these contradictions, there has been created both struggle and alliance between the two parties.¹³⁵ If we do not understand the particular features of both aspects of the contradiction, we shall fail to understand not only the relations of each party with other forces, but also the relations between the two parties; why is there the possibility of new co-operation between the Guomindang and the Communist Party? It is because of internal changes within the Guomindang which have emerged as a result of the people's dissatisfaction over Japanese oppression.

(p.85) It can thus be seen that in studying the particularity of any kind of contradiction---the contradiction in each form of motion of matter, the contradiction in each of its processes of development, the two aspects of the contradiction in each process, the contradiction at each stage of a process, and the two aspects of the contradiction at each stage---in studying the particularity of all of these contradictions, we must not be subjective and arbitrary but must analyse it concretely. Without concrete

analysis there can be no knowledge of the particularity of any contradiction.¹³⁶

Marx and Engels¹³⁷ have provided us with excellent models of such concrete analysis.

When Marx and Engels applied the law of the unity of contradictions¹³⁸ to the study of the socio-historical process, they discovered the basic causes of social development to be the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction of class struggle,¹³⁹ and also the resultant contradiction between the economic base and its superstructure (politics, ideology).¹⁴⁰

When Marx applied this law to the study of the economic structure of capitalist society, he discovered that the basic contradiction of this society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This contradiction manifests itself in the contradiction between the organized character of production in individual enterprises and the anarchic character of production in society as a whole. In terms of class relations, it manifests itself in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.¹⁴¹

On the question of using dialectics in the study of objective phenomena, Marx and Engels¹⁴² were not in any way subjective and arbitrary but, from the concrete conditions in the actual objective movement of these phenomena, discovered their concrete contradictions, the concrete position of each aspect of every contradiction and the concrete inter-relations of the contradiction, and so on.¹⁴³ We must study this attitude, which is the only correct one in study.

(p.86) The relationship between the universality and the particularity of contradiction is the relationship between the general character and the individual character of contradiction. By the former we mean that contradiction exists in and runs through all processes from beginning to end; motion, things, processes, the world, and thinking---all are contradictions. To deny contradiction is to deny everything. This is a universal truth for all times and all countries, which admits of no exception. Hence the general character, the absoluteness of contradiction. But this general character is contained in the¹⁴⁴ individual character, the general character is made manifest in each individual character; without individual character there can be no general character. If all individual character were removed, what general character would remain? It is because each contradiction is particular that not one thing in the whole universe is the same, that change is limitless, and that its existence is temporary, and therefore relative.¹⁴⁵ Su Dongpo stated "If things are observed as they change, then heaven and earth can't even remain for a moment." In modern terms, it could be said that what he was speaking of was the particularity of contradiction, its relativity. "If things are observed unchanging, all the things and myself will last forever."¹⁴⁶ This speaks of the universality of contradiction, its absoluteness. This truth concerning general and individual character, concerning absoluteness and relativity, is the quintessence of the theory of contradiction.¹⁴⁷ If this is understood, then anything can be mastered (yi tong bai tong); what the ancients called "to be familiar with the Dao" (wen Dao), viewed from today's perspective is to be familiar with the Dao of contradiction.

V. The Principal Contradiction and the Principal Aspect of a Contradiction

There are still two points in the problem of the particularity of contradiction which must be singled out for analysis, namely, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction.

There are many contradictions in a complex process,¹⁴⁸ and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions.

(p.87) For instance, in capitalist society the¹⁴⁹ contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie forms the principal contradiction. The others¹⁵¹ such as those between the remnant feudal forces¹⁵¹ and the bourgeoisie, between the peasant petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, between the proletariat and the peasant petty bourgeoisie, between non-monopoly capitalists and finance¹⁵² capitalists, between bourgeois democracy and¹⁵³ fascism, among the capitalist countries and between imperialism and the colonies, are all determined or influenced by this principal contradiction.

In a semi-colonial country such as China, the relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions presents a complicated picture. Before a semi-colony suffered from imperialist oppression, its principal contradiction was the contradiction between the feudal or semi-feudal system and the broad masses of the people. All other contradictions are determined by this principal contradiction. However, when such a society suffers under imperialist oppression, the internal principal contradiction temporarily changes into a non-principal contradiction, and the contradiction between imperialism and the entire, or almost entire, semi-colonial society becomes the principal one, determining the development of all other contradictions. The status of the principal or non-principal contradiction changes at this time according to the extent of imperialist oppression and the extent of the people's revolution of the semi-colony.

For instance, when imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes¹⁵⁴ can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction, between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position. So it was in China in the Opium War,¹⁵⁵ the Yi He Tuan War, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, and so it is now in the present Sino-Japanese War. (p.88) Externally, the American War of Independence, the war between England and South Africa, the war between Spain and the Philippines, and so on, have all been like this.

But in another situation, the contradictions change position. When imperialism carries on its oppression not by war, but by milder means---political, economic and cultural---the ruling classes in semi-colonial countries capitulate to imperialism, and the two form an alliance; opposition changes to unity between the two for the joint oppression of the masses of the people. At such a time, the masses often resort to civil war against the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes, while imperialism often gives secret assistance to the internal ruling strata to oppress the internal revolutionary war, and so avoids direct action.¹⁵⁶ Thus the internal contradictions become particularly sharp. For instance, in China, the Taiping War, the revolutionary war of 1911, the great Revolution of 1925-27, the war of the Soviets after 1927:¹⁵⁷ externally, there were the February and October revolutions in Russia (Russia too had had many semi-colonial characteristics), the revolutionary characteristics of the numerous civil wars in Central and South America, and so on. Wars among the various ruling groups in the semi-colonies

also manifest the intensification of internal contradictions; there have been many of these in China, and Central and South America, which fall into this category.¹⁵⁸

When a¹⁵⁹ civil war develops to the point of threatening the very existence of imperialism and its running dogs, the domestic rulers,¹⁶⁰ imperialism often adopts other methods in order to maintain its rule; it either tries to split the revolutionary front from within, for example, the treachery of the Chinese bourgeoisie in 1927, or sends armed forces to help the domestic rulers¹⁶¹ directly, for example, the latter period of the civil war in the Soviet Union, and the present war in Spain (editor's note: the Spanish civil war lasted from 1936-39). At such a time,¹⁶² imperialism and the domestic feudal classes and even the bourgeoisie stand completely at one pole (p.89) while the masses of the people stand at the other pole.¹⁶³ It is clearly evident at such a time that the principal external contradiction between imperialism and the semi-colony, and the principal internal contradiction between the feudal forces and broad masses of people, almost merge to form a principal contradiction which determines the development and status of the other contradictions.

But whatever happens, there is no doubt at all that at every stage in the development of a process, there is only one principal contradiction which plays the leading role.

Hence, if in any process there are a number of contradictions, one of them must be the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role, while the rest occupy a secondary and subordinate position. Therefore, in studying any process,¹⁶⁴ we must firstly ascertain clearly whether it is a simple or a complex process. If it is a complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved. This is the method Marx taught us in his study of capitalist society. Likewise Lenin in his study of imperialism,¹⁶⁵ and Lenin and Stalin in their study of the economics of the transitional period in the Soviet Union, have taught us this method. There are thousands of scholars and men of action who do not understand it, and the result is that, lost in a fog, they are unable to get to the heart of a problem and naturally cannot find a way to resolve its contradictions.

As we have said, one must not treat all the contradictions in a process as being equal but must distinguish between the principal and the secondary contradictions, and pay special attention to grasping the principal one. But, within a contradiction, whether principal or secondary, should the two contradictory aspects or profiles (ce-mian) be treated as equal? Again, no. In any contradiction, and at whatever time, the development of the contradictory aspects or profiles is uneven. (p.90) Sometimes they seem to be in equilibrium, which is however only temporary and relative, while unevenness is basic; that is, when they seem to be in equilibrium, there is in fact no absolute equilibrium. Of the two contradictory aspects, one must be principal and the other secondary. The principal aspect is the one playing the leading role in the contradiction.¹⁶⁶

But this situation is not static; the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other.¹⁶⁷ In a given process or at a given stage in the development of a contradiction, A is the principal aspect and B is the non-principal aspect; at another stage or in another process the roles are reversed---a change determined by the strength of the struggle between the two sides.¹⁶⁸

For instance, for a long period the bourgeoisie has occupied the principal position in capitalist society, playing the leading role, while the proletariat remained subordinate to it. However, prior to and after the revolution, the proletariat changes into the principal position and plays the leading role, while the bourgeoisie changes in the opposite direction. The Soviet Union on the eve of the October Revolution was like this.¹⁶⁹

In capitalist society, capitalism has changed its position from being a subordinate force in the feudal society of the past to being the principal force,¹⁷⁰ while the feudal forces changed from their principal position to a subordinate one; but how do we explain Japan and pre-revolutionary Russia? In these cases, the feudal forces still enjoyed superiority, and capitalism was still not performing the function of deciding everything. This was due to their contradictory aspects not yet having completed their decisive change. Because of the era, this change could not travel the old historical road, but was change which came into being under other historical circumstances; that is, in which the landlord class and the bourgeoisie changed entirely to a position of being dominated, and in which the proletariat and the peasantry rose to occupy the leading position. At present, all countries which have still not yet completed a capitalist transformation (including China) will follow this new road, although (p.91) they do not leap over the stage of the democratic revolution; however, this revolution will be led and carried out by the proletariat.¹⁷¹

In the contradiction between imperialism and the entire Chinese society, the former occupies the principal aspect, and it enjoys superiority in the struggle between the two sides. But in this situation of mutual opposition, this state of affairs is in the process of changing; China on the one hand is changing from being oppressed to being free and independent; imperialism, however, is moving toward a position at which it will be overthrown.

In China, the antagonistic situation existing internally between the feudal forces and the broad masses of the people is also changing. The people will rely on revolutionary struggle to transform themselves into the leading and dominant force. There has already been illustration of this in the past; the Southern revolutionary forces changed from a secondary to the principal position, and the Northern warlords changed in the opposite direction; and there was a similar situation in the Soviet areas, in which the peasants changed from the ruled to the rulers, and the landlords changed in the opposite direction.

In the relationship in China between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, because the bourgeoisie has retained the means of production and sovereignty, to the present it still occupies the leading position. However, in terms of leadership of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution, the proletariat occupies the leading position because of its level of consciousness and revolutionary thoroughness as compared to the vacillation of the bourgeoisie. This point will influence the future of the revolution in China. Only if the proletariat allies itself with the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie will it be able to politically and materially occupy the leading position. If it can do this, the proletariat will assume the decisive leading function of the revolution.

With regards the contradiction between the peasantry and the workers, the workers have changed from their former subordinate position to their present leading position, and the peasantry have changed in the opposite direction. In the contradictions between the industrial workers and the handicraft workers, skilled and unskilled workers, (p.92) town and countryside, mental and manual labour, materialism and idealism, all have made the same sort of change.

At certain times in the revolutionary struggle, the difficulties outweigh the favourable conditions and so constitute the principal aspect of the contradiction and the favourable conditions constitute the secondary aspect. But through their efforts the revolutionaries, by utilizing their favourable conditions as a base, can overcome the difficulties step by step and open up a favourable new situation; the difficulties which

made up the principal position will change so that favourable conditions become principal.¹⁷² This is what happened after the failure of the revolution¹⁷³ in 1927 and during the Long March of the¹⁷⁴ Red Army. In the present Sino-Japanese War, China is again in a very difficult position, but we should and can exert ourselves to change that situation.¹⁷⁵ Conversely, favourable conditions can be transformed into difficulty if the revolutionaries make mistakes. Thus the victory of the revolution of 1925-27¹⁷⁶ turned into defeat. The victory of the Central Soviet in smashing the first, second, third, and fourth encirclement campaigns changed into the defeat of the fifth encirclement campaign.¹⁷⁷

When we engage in study, the same holds good for the contradiction in the passage from ignorance to knowledge. For those who have not studied Marxism, ignorance or scanty acquaintance is the principal aspect of the contradiction, while the depth and extensiveness of Marxism is the other aspect of the contradiction.¹⁷⁸ But by assiduous study, ignorance can be transformed into knowledge, and scanty knowledge into substantial knowledge.¹⁷⁹ Many of our comrades are moving in that direction. The opposite situation is the same; if one refuses to progress when only half the distance has been covered, or lets one's thoughts become confused, or takes the wrong path, then one's knowledge can change to ignorance and correctness change to error. Kautsky, Plekhanov, Chen Duxiu and others have taken this road. Some conceited types within our ranks are also in a similar danger if they don't change.

(p.93) I regard all principal and non-principal positions of the aspects of a contradiction as involved in this mutual change.

Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there is no change in their respective positions.¹⁸⁰ It should be realized that under normal conditions, and viewed from a materialist point of view, they really are unchanging and absolute things; however, there are historically many particular situations in which they do change. The productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that sometimes¹⁸¹ such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role. The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy. When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. Are we going against materialism when we say this? No. The reason is that we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental.¹⁸² We also---and indeed must---recognize the reaction of mental on material things.¹⁸³ This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism.

(p.94) In studying the particularity of contradiction, unless we examine these two facets---the principal and the non-principal contradictions in a process, and the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction---that is, unless we examine the distinctive character of these two facets of contradiction, we shall get bogged down in abstractions, be unable to understand contradiction concretely and consequently be unable to find the correct method of resolving it. The distinctive character or

particularity of these two facets¹⁸⁴ represents the unevenness¹⁸⁵ that is in contradiction. Nothing in this world develops absolutely evenly, hence the world as it is; we must oppose the theory of even development (or the theory of equilibrium).¹⁸⁶ The study of the various states of unevenness in contradictions, of the principal and non-principal contradictions and of the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction constitutes an essential method by which a revolutionary political party correctly determines its strategic and tactical policies both in political (and in military affairs). Therefore this question cannot be overemphasized.¹⁸⁷

VI. The Identity and Struggle of a Contradiction.¹⁸⁸

When we have resolved the problem of¹⁸⁹ the universality and the particularity of contradiction, we must proceed to study the problem of the identity and struggle of¹⁹⁰ a contradiction; only by doing so can the study of the law of the unity of contradiction be completely resolved.

Identity, unity, coincidence, interpenetration, interpermeation, interdependence (or mutual dependence for existence), interconnection or mutual co-operation---all these different terms mean the same thing and refer to the following two points: first, the existence of each of the two aspects of a contradiction in a process¹⁹¹ presupposes the existence of the other aspect, and both aspects coexist in a single entity; second, in given conditions, each of the two contradictory aspects transforms itself into its opposite. This is the meaning of identity.

Lenin said:

"Dialectics is the teaching which shows how opposites can be and how they happen to be (how they become) identical---under (p.95) what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another,---why the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another."

What does this passage mean?

The contradictory aspects in every process¹⁹² are in opposition to each other, are in mutual disharmony, unequal in strength, at odds with one another, and in dispute; all are replete with such hostile phenomena. Without exception they are contained in all processes, phenomena, things, and thought.¹⁹³ A simple process contains only a single pair of opposites (yuan-jia),¹⁹⁴ while a complex process contains two or more. And in turn, the pairs of opposites are in contradiction to one another. That is how all processes, phenomena and things¹⁹⁵ are constituted and set in motion.

This being so, there is an utter lack of identity or unity. How then can one speak of identity or unity? In this do the strangeness and wonder of the world find themselves.

The fact is that no contradictory aspect can exist in isolation. Without its opposite aspect, each loses the condition for its existence. Just think, can any one contradictory aspect of a thing or of a concept in the human mind exist independently? It cannot. Without life, there would be no death; without death, there would be no life. Without "above," there would be no "below"; without "below", there would be no "above." Without misfortune, there would be no good fortune; without good fortune, there would be no misfortune. Without facility, there would be no difficulty; without difficulty, there would be no facility.¹⁹⁶ Without the bourgeoisie, there would be no proletariat, without the proletariat, there would be no bourgeoisie. Without colonies, there would be no imperialist oppression; without imperialist oppression, there would be no colonies.¹⁹⁷ It is so with the opposition of both sides in all (p.96) processes, phenomena, and things; in given conditions, on the one hand they are opposed to each other, and on the other they are interconnected, interpenetrating, interpermeating, interdependent, and in alliance---both in contradiction and in union---and this character is described as identity. In given conditions, all contradictions¹⁹⁸ possess the character of non-identity and hence are described as being in contradiction. But they also possess the character of identity and hence are interconnected. This is what Lenin means when he says that dialectics studies how there can be identity.¹⁹⁹ This is the first meaning of identity.

But is it enough to say merely that each of the contradictory aspects is the condition for the other's existence, that there is identity between them and that consequently they can coexist in a single entity? No, it is not. The matter does not end with their dependence on each other for their existence; what is more important is their transformation into each other. In given conditions²⁰⁰ each of the contradictory aspects within a thing transforms itself into its opposite. This is the second meaning of the identity of contradiction.

Why is there identity here, too? You see, in the relationship between life and death, whether within an organism or in cellular life within an organism, life is transformed into death; life can never last indefinitely, and under certain conditions it moves towards its opposite, and changes into death. Death? Under certain conditions, death too can produce new life, and death is transformed into life; it is not something which comes to an end with death. One could ask: if there is between life and death no connection, no involvement or relationship, that is to say, no identity, why is it that the two opposed entities of life and death are capable of changing into one another?

The oppressed and deprived proletariat moves towards a dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, it changes to no longer being oppressed or deprived; the bourgeoisie, however, through the collapse of its class, changes to the point where it comes under the rule of the proletarian state.²⁰¹ This has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place throughout the world. If there were no interconnections and identity of opposites in given conditions, how could such a change take place?

(p.97) Neither imperialist oppression of the colonies nor the fate of the colonies to suffer under that oppression, can last forever. The imperialists will be overthrown by the revolutionary efforts of their own peoples and the peoples of the colonies, and will come under the rule of the people. How about the peoples of the colonies and the imperialist countries? The day will come when oppression will be discarded and freedom and liberation (the opposite aspect to oppression) will be achieved; because of certain conditions, there are identity and common characteristics between the two aspects.

The regular warfare of the Great Revolution of 1927 changed into Soviet guerilla war, which commenced the period of Soviet guerilla war which again changed subsequently into regular warfare. From now on, it will change again from Soviet war into anti-Japanese national war. There emerged an identity in these periods because of certain conditions, an interpenetration, an interpermeation and alliance between the two opposite things.

Because of its class character and imperialist blandishments (these being the conditions), the Guomindang's revolutionary Three People's Principles changed after 1927 into a reactionary policy;²⁰² but it has been compelled to change to one of resistance to Japan and saving the nation²⁰³ because of the sharpening of the contradiction between China and Japan and because of the Communist Party's policy of the united front (these being the conditions). Things in contradiction change into one another, and herein lies that kind of identity.²⁰⁴

The agrarian revolution of the Soviet areas has been a process in which the landlord class owning the land is transformed into a class that has lost its land, while the peasants who once lost their land are transformed into small holders who have acquired land, and it will be such a process once again. In given conditions, having and not having, acquiring and losing, are interconnected to give identity.²⁰⁵ Under socialism, private peasant ownership is transformed into the public ownership of socialist agriculture; this has already taken place in the Soviet Union, and we will be able to do the same.²⁰⁶ There is a bridge leading from private (p.98) property to public property, which in philosophy is called identity,²⁰⁷ or interpenetration.

Bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy are in opposition, but the former inevitably changes into the latter; under certain conditions there are complementary elements produced between things in opposition.

To raise the national culture is in fact to prepare the conditions for changing to an international culture; to strive for a democratic republic is in fact to prepare the conditions for abolishing the democratic republic and changing to a new state system; to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat²⁰⁸ is in fact to prepare the conditions for abolishing this dictatorship and advancing to²⁰⁹ the elimination of all state systems. To establish and build the Communist Party is in fact to prepare the conditions for the elimination of the Communist Party and all political parties. To build a revolutionary army²¹⁰ and to carry on revolutionary war is in fact to prepare the conditions for the permanent elimination of war. These opposites are at the same time complementary.

There are those who say that the Communist Party is internationalist, and is therefore incapable of being at the same time patriotic. However, we make a declaration that we are internationalists but at the same time, because we are a political party of a colony (the condition), we struggle for the protection of the motherland, and in opposition to imperialist oppression. Only when we have firstly escaped from imperialist oppression, can we participate in a world communist society; it is this that allows the two to constitute an identity. Under certain conditions, patriotism and imperialism are both in opposition and complementary. Why is it that the Communist Parties of imperialist countries resolutely oppose patriotism? It is because patriotism in that context has identity only with the interests of the bourgeoisie, and is fundamentally opposed to the interests of the proletariat.

There are those who say that the Communist Party cannot also believe in the Three People's Principles at the same time. However, we declare that, prior to the stage of the Communist movement, while remaining adherents to the Party's (p.99) communist programme, we can do no other than resolutely lead the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal national democratic revolution (this is the condition). Therefore, not only do we not oppose them, we previously implemented the true programme of the Three People's Principles (anti-imperialist nationalism, the democratic principle of soviets of workers and peasants, and the principle of people's livelihood through agrarian revolution). Moreover, in the past decade, the tradition of the true Three People's Principles has remained only with the Communist Party. Besides a few elements like Song Qingling, He Xiangning, Li Yangjiu etc., the Guomindang has discarded this tradition. The political programme of the Communist Party for the democratic revolution is not in conflict with the true Three People's Principles, the thorough-going and progressive Three People's Principles. When we have passed through the democratic stage, we will change to communism. The Three People's Principles and communism are not a single entity, and the two are in contradiction; in the present and future stages they are not a single entity, and they are in contradiction. However, they are both in opposition and complementary; a certain condition can create identity.

We can also speak of something that is happening at this very moment. War and peace are in contradiction, but they are also connected;²¹¹ war is transformed into peace (for instance, the First World War was transformed into the Treaty of Versailles;²¹² China's civil war was transformed into internal peace following the Xian Incident.²¹³ Peace is transformed into war (the present world peace is temporary, and will be transformed into the second world war;²¹⁴ the peace following Japan's invasion of the four eastern provinces was temporary, and has now begun to change into a continental war). Why is this so? Because²¹⁵ they have an identity in given conditions. The Chinese proletariat and bourgeoisie have agreed upon an anti-Japanese united front; this is one aspect of the

contradiction. The proletariat must raise its political consciousness and pay close attention to the bourgeoisie's political vacillations, and its corrupting and destructive effect on the Communist Party, in order to guarantee the independence of Party and class; this is the other aspect of the contradiction. A united front of the various political parties with independence for those parties, (p.100) are the two aspects of the contradiction constituting the present political movement. There would be no united front if one of these two aspects, the party's right to determine its own policies, was removed. We give the people freedom; this is one aspect. We also suppress the Chinese traitors and wreckers; this is the other aspect. Because of certain conditions, these two, freedom and unfreedom, are connected, and it won't do to be without either of them; this is the unity or identity of opposites. The organizational form of the Communist Party and the Soviets, as well as the anti-Japanese government which we advocate, is democratic centralist; they are democratic but also centralist, and the two are in contradiction and unity because, under certain conditions, they have identity. The proletarian democratic dictatorship in the Soviet Union, and our democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants of the last decade, are democratic toward the revolutionary classes; they are also dictatorial (or despotic) toward counter-revolutionary classes. There is identity between the two extremes of these opposites.

The resting and training of troops is at the same time a condition for victory in battle; "to train troops for a thousand days" in order to "use them for one morning". To separate and advance is at the same time a condition for a combined attack (develop to attack jointly); retreat and defence, are at the same time in order to counter-attack and take the offensive (retreat to advance, and defend to attack). There is no other reason for being devious than it is the most effective method of wiping out the enemy (be devious to be direct); in order to succeed in the west, make a thrust towards the east (cause an uproar in the east, and strike in the west). Divide the soldiers to win over the masses, in order to facilitate centralization to wipe out the enemy; centralize to wipe out the enemy in order to facilitate the division of the soldiers to win over the masses. In order to carry out orders decisively, flexible freedoms need be allowed under a unified scheme; the strict implementation of discipline requires the development of conscious initiative; the statement of individual interest is permissible, but in the end these must be subordinated to the group decision; work at the front is important, but work at the rear cannot be discarded or ignored; if one's health is poor one must think of convalescence, but in times of urgency, one also must think of sacrifice; everybody wants life to be easy, but when economic difficulties arise, one has to suffer; military training is important, and without it we could not smash the enemy, (p. 101) but political work is also of importance for without it we would be defeated; the abundant experience of the old soldiers and cadres is worthwhile and valuable, but if there are no new soldiers and cadres, the war and our work cannot be continued; courage is important, but there must be a strategem; although Zhang Fei was alright, he was after all not as good as Zhao Zilong ;²¹⁶ the part of the work which we lead is important, but that part led by others and the entire work is also important if not more important; small group mentality is incorrect, and when one's own opinion and that of the group or higher authorities is in contradiction, one's opinion can and should be explained; it is , however, impermissible to freely express that opinion to any other members at a time when the group or higher authorities have not yet given approval, still less to instigate the subordinate members to oppose the higher authorities; the discipline of the minority subordinating itself to the majority, and the lower level subordinating itself to the higher level, is the minimum discipline of the Communist Party and the Red Army. "Good medicine is bitter to the taste but beneficial for the sickness." "Sincere advice is not pleasant to hear but it is beneficial for one's conduct."²¹⁷ "It is on disaster that good fortune perches, it is beneath good fortune that disaster crouches."²¹⁸ "To love yet know their bad qualities, to hate and yet know their excellences."²¹⁹ "To glance ahead but not behind is called being a boorish oaf; to know one but not two is he who is not yet a wise man."²²⁰

All contradictory things are interconnected; not only do they coexist in a single entity in given conditions, but in other given conditions, they also transform themselves into each other. This is the full meaning of the unity of opposites.²²¹ This is what Lenin meant when he talked of how they happen to be identical, under what kind of conditions they become identical, transforming themselves into one another.²²²

Why is it that the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into each other? Because this is just how things are in objective reality. The fact is that the unity or identity of opposites in objective things is not dead or rigid; but is living, conditional, mobile, temporary and relative; in given conditions, every contradictory aspect transforms itself into its opposite.²²³

(p.102) Why can an egg but not a stone be transformed into a chicken? Why is there identity between war and peace and none between war and a stone? Why can human beings give birth only to human beings and not to anything else? The sole reason is that the identity of opposites exists only in²²⁴ given conditions. Without these necessary given conditions there can be no identity whatsoever.

Why is it that in Russia²²⁵ the democratic²²⁶ revolution was directly linked with the²²⁷ socialist revolution, while in France the democratic²²⁸ revolution was not directly linked with a socialist revolution and the Paris Commune²²⁹ ended in failure? Why is it, on the other hand, that the nomadic system of Mongolia and Central Asia has been directly linked with socialism? Why is it that the Chinese revolution can avoid a capitalist future and be directly linked with socialism and avoid²³⁰ the old historical road of England, America, France etc?²³¹ Why is it that the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the Chinese Revolutions of 1911 and 1927 were not linked with revolutionary victory, but to failure? Why is it that in his entire life, most of Napoleon's wars were linked to victory, while at the one battle of Waterloo, he was roundly defeated, his army beaten and himself taken prisoner? Why is it possible to build a railroad to Xinjiang and not to the moon? Why have the cordial relations between Germany and the Soviet Union turned into enmity, while the enmity between France and the Soviet Union turned temporarily into cordial relations? In all of these questions, the sole reason is the concrete conditions of the time. When certain necessary conditions are present,²³² contradictions arise in processes²³³ and, moreover, the opposites contained in them are interdependent and become transformed into one another; otherwise none of this would be possible. It is for this reason that none of the following can become an identity of opposites, or a concrete contradiction, and merely add to the material for annoyance and amusement amongst men: Don Quixote's mighty battle with the windmill, Sun Wukong's somersault of one hundred and eight thousand li over the clouds, Alice's journey through Wonderland, Robinson's wanderings on his lone island, Ah Q's spiritual victory, Hitler's world domination, Hegel's absolute spirit, Bukharin's theory of equilibrium, Trotsky's permanent revolution, the ideological unity of the emperor's scholars, Chen Duxiu's opportunism, the pro-Japanese faction's theory that weapons decide everything, and including from among Ancient China's legends, "the man of Qi's concern that the sky might fall", "Gua Fu's race with the moon",²³⁴ (p.103) and so on.²³⁵

Such is the problem of identity. What then is struggle? And what is the relation between identity and struggle?

Lenin said:

"The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute."

What does this passage mean?

All processes have a beginning and an end, all processes transform themselves into their opposites. The constancy of all processes is relative, but²³⁶ the transformation of one process into another is absolute. The unity, identity, consistency, constancy, and union of contradictions are contained within the struggle of contradictions, and become an element in the struggle of contradictions. That is the meaning of Lenin's statement.²³⁷

That is to say, it is insufficient to simply acknowledge that contradiction leads to movement; it must also be understood under which conditions contradiction gives rise to movement.

The first condition of unity (identity) in which contradiction gives rise to movement is the particular condition of movement. In daily life it is called rest, constantly unchanging, immobile, death, at a standstill, deadlock, stalemate, peaceful, equilibrium, balance, harmony, compromise, union, and so on; all of these are relative, temporary, and conditional. The second condition of unity in which contradiction gives rise to movement also must be recognized, that is the general condition of movement. This is the splitting of unity, its struggle, life, movement, impermanence, liveliness, change, intranquility (bu he-ping), disequilibrium, disharmony, intransigence, and even conflict, antagonism, or war; this is absolute. The relative condition of contradiction of identity, unity, rest, death, etc., is contained in the condition of contradiction which is absolute and in struggle. Because struggle permeates a process from beginning to end, permeates all processes, (p.104) it becomes that which is absolute in them. Not to understand this principle, is metaphysical and mechanistic, and to actually reject dialectics.

International peace treaties are relative, while international struggle is absolute. A united front between classes is relative, while class struggle is absolute. Unanimity in intra-party ideology is relative, while struggle in intra-party ideology is absolute. Equilibrium, solidity, attraction, and association etc. in natural phenomena are relative, while disequilibrium, insolidity, rejection, dissociation etc. are absolute. When a process is in a condition of peace treaty, united front, in unity and solidarity, equilibrium, solidity, attraction, association etc., contradiction and struggle still exist, but they have not adopted an acute form; it is certainly not a case of there being no contradictions, or of a cessation of struggle. Struggle ceaselessly destroys one relative condition and transforms it into another relative condition, destroys one process and transforms it into another process, and this ubiquitous characteristic of struggle is the absoluteness of contradiction.

When we said above that two opposite things can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other because there is identity between them, we were speaking of conditionality, that is to say, in given conditions two contradictory things can be united and can transform themselves into each other, but in the absence of these conditions, they cannot constitute a contradiction, cannot coexist in the same entity and cannot transform themselves into one another. It is because the identity of opposites obtains only in given conditions that we have said identity is conditional and relative. We may add that struggle²³⁸ permeates a process from beginning to end and makes one process transform itself into another, that it is ubiquitous, and that struggle is therefore unconditional and absolute.

The combination of conditional, relative identity and unconditional, absolute struggle constitutes the movement of opposites in all things.

(p.105) So that this point may be clearly understood, we again utilize as examples the relationship between life and death, and the relationship between labour and capital: Within an organism, the death of old cells is the precondition for the production of new cells, and is the precondition for the process of life. The two contradictory aspects of life and death are united within an organism, and also change into each other; live cells change into dead cells, and dead cells change into live cells (live cells are regenerated (tuotai) from dead cells). But this unity of life and death, their coexistence within an organism, are conditional, temporary, and relative. However, from start to finish, the incompatibility of life and death, their mutual rejection, struggle, negation, and transformation, are unconditional, eternal and absolute. The absoluteness of struggle is indicated by live elements within an organism ceaselessly triumphing over dead elements and moreover controlling the dead elements. Under given conditions life changes into death and death into life; such conditions allow an identity between life and death, and enable them to change into each other. Due to the mutual struggle of these two contradictory entities, life and death, life is inevitably transformed into death and death is inevitably transformed into life. This inevitability is unconditional and absolute. From this it can be seen that there must at a certain stage in development be a certain condition of temperature and environment etc., for life and death to change from one to the other, and for there to be an identity between them. This is one problem. The reasons for the so-called temporariness and relativity of life and death, that is, where the conditions do not change and are unable to lengthen life or death, are to be found in the struggle, negation, and mutual rejection between the two. This situation is eternal and absolute. This is the other problem.

The proletariat produces surplus value for the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat's labour power. This is a unified process which determines the survival of capitalism. Labour and capital are each a condition for the other's existence. However, this condition has (p.106) a given limit, and capitalist development must remain within this given limit; if it is exceeded, ruptures emerge in the unified process, and a socialist revolution appears. These ruptures emerge abruptly, but also emerge gradually in that preparations for their emergence commence from the day the two classes come into existence; the struggle of both sides is continual, and it is this which lays the ground for a sudden change. From this it can be seen that the coexistence of the two classes is preserved as a result of given conditions; this coexistence under given conditions produces a unity or identity between the two classes. Under given conditions the two classes also change from one to the other, such that the exploiters change into the exploited and the exploited change into the exploiters, and capitalist society is transformed into a socialist society. The two contradictory entities have an identity under given conditions. This is one problem. The two sides are in constant struggle. There is struggle within an entity, and especially the struggle of revolution. This unavoidable condition is unconditional, absolute and inevitable. This is the other problem.²³⁹

In identity there is struggle.²⁴⁰ To quote Lenin, "...there is an absolute in the relative." Because of this, the unity of opposites is itself a manifestation or an element of the struggle of contradictions. This is our conclusion with regard to this problem.

According to this conclusion, it is perfectly evident whether or not the so-called theories of class harmony and the unity of ideology still have any standing. The theory of international class harmony becomes the opportunism of the workers' movements in every country, and they have no other function than to simply serve as the running dogs of the bourgeoisie. China too has a so-called theory of class harmony, but this is a tune sung by bourgeois reformism. It has no other purpose than specifically to swindle the proletariat so that it will remain forever the slave of the bourgeoisie. The meaningless clichés of the so-called theory of the unity of ideology (p.107), directly or indirectly depend on the nonsense spewed out by officialdom that it is "the learned

opinion of the scholars". Its purpose is nothing but the suppression of the truth, and the obstruction of the progress of the revolution. True scientific theory is the law of the unity of opposites of materialist dialectics, and not these other melodies.

VII. The Place of Antagonism in Contradiction.

The question of the struggle of opposites includes the question of what is antagonism. Our answer is that contradiction exists in all processes from beginning to end, and that there is a struggle between the two sides of a contradiction from start to finish. Antagonism is one form of struggle, but not all contradictions have it;²⁴¹ when certain contradictions in a certain process of development adopt a form in which force becomes overt and there is mutual conflict, the struggle of contradictions manifests itself as antagonism. Antagonism is²⁴² a particular manifestation of the struggle of opposites.

For instance, consider the contradiction between the exploiting and the exploited classes. Such contradictory classes coexist for a long time in the same society, be it slave society, feudal society or capitalist society, and they struggle with each other, but it is not until the contradiction between the two classes develops to a certain stage that it assumes the form of open antagonism, and it is then that society ruptures and revolution and war are engendered.²⁴³

The explosion of a bomb, the hatching of a chicken from its egg, and animal regeneration (tuo-tai), are all contradictory things coexistence in a single entity, and which at a certain moment, adopt the form of conflict, disruption (po-ju), and rupture.²⁴⁴

In the peaceful coexistence between countries, included in which is that between socialist and capitalist states, contradiction and struggle exist without ceasing; only at a certain stage in development does war emerge.²⁴⁵

(p.108) In the Soviet Union, the New Economic Policy permitted a considerable development of capitalist elements. Lenin considered that at that time there was a possibility of utilizing state capitalism under the dictatorship of the proletariat; that is to say, the utilization of certain bourgeois elements to develop the forces of production, simultaneous with their control by soviet laws, following which they could be limited and prohibited. At this time the two contradictions of socialism and capitalism coexisted within socialist society in mutual struggle and interconnection; it was only after the task of eliminating the rich peasantry and capitalist remnants had been raised that the existence of both elements became an impossibility, and a life and death struggle of overtly antagonistic form emerged.

The first united front between the Guomindang and the Communist Party was also like this.

However, the contradictions in many processes, phenomena and things do not develop into antagonistic ones.

For instance, the contradictions between correct and incorrect ideas in the Communist Party, between the advanced and the backward in culture, between town and country in economics, between the forces and relations of production, between production and consumption, between exchange value and use value, between the various technical divisions of labour, between workers and peasants in class relations, between life and death in nature, between heredity and mutation, between cold and hot, between day and night; none has an antagonistic condition of existence.²⁴⁶

Bukharin regarded contradiction and antagonism as one and the same thing. He therefore considered that in a society in which socialism had been accomplished there were neither antagonisms nor contradictions. Lenin said: "This is extremely incorrect, antagonism and contradiction are not at all one and the same. Under socialism, the first will disappear, the second will remain."²⁴⁷ Bukharin is an advocate of the theory of

equilibrium which refuses to recognize that the development of a thing is due to the movement of internal contradictions, and which considers that society will continue to develop even though there are no contradictions under socialism.

(p.109) Trotsky sets out from a different extreme, but also regards contradiction and antagonism as one and the same thing. As a result, he considers that under socialism there not only exists a contradiction between workers and peasants, but that this will develop into an antagonism like the contradiction between labour and capital, which can only be resolved by employing revolutionary methods. The Soviet Union however has used the method of the socialization of agriculture to resolve it, and moreover has resolved it under the conditions of socialism in one country, without having to wait for the international revolution alleged as necessary by the Trotskyites.

Bukharin has reduced contradiction to the point of elimination, while the Trotskyites have elevated contradiction into antagonism; neither of the two extremes of the right or left wing understands the problem of contradiction.

The method for resolving a general contradiction is fundamentally different from the method of resolving antagonism; this is the particularity of contradiction and the particularity of the method of resolving contradiction. This is a problem which should be given specific recognition. Whatever is antagonistic contains contradictoriness, but not all contradictions necessarily adopt an antagonistic form, and here we have a general distinction.²⁴⁸

The law of the unity of contradictions is the fundamental law of the universe, and the fundamental law of ideological method (si-xiang fang-fa).²⁴⁹ Lenin called it the kernel of dialectics, and it stands opposed to the metaphysical view of development. It is opposed to the absolute law of identity of formal logic. Contradiction exists in all objective and subjective processes of things, and throughout all processes from beginning to end;²⁵⁰ this is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. The aspects of contradiction and the universe each have their respective characteristics;²⁵¹ people's minds are all different just like their faces, and contradictions likewise all differ in the form they take. This is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. In given conditions, opposites possess identity and consequently can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other; this again is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. But the struggle of opposites is ceaseless, (p.110) it goes on both when the opposites are coexisting and when they are transforming themselves into each other, and becomes especially conspicuous when they are transforming themselves into one another; this again is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. In studying the particularity and relativity of contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the principal²⁵² aspect and the non-principal aspect of the contradiction. When studying the struggle of contradictions we must give attention to the general and the particular forms of the struggle of contradiction---that is, the distinction in which contradiction develops into antagonism. This is what we know of the law of the unity of contradictions.²⁵³

FOOTNOTES TO THE TEXT

- (1) Official text reads; "The identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction." SW I, p.311; XJ I, p.274.
- (2) Addition in official text; "The criticism to which the idealism of the Deborin school has been subjected in Soviet philosophical circles in recent years has aroused great interest among us. Deborin's idealism has exerted a very bad influence in the Chinese Communist Party, and it cannot be said that the dogmatist thinking in our Party is unrelated to the approach of that school. Our present study of philosophy should therefore have the eradication of dogmatist thinking as its main objective." SW I, p. 311; XJ I, p.274.
- (3) Official text reads; "knowledge" (ren-shi); SW I, p.311; XJ I, p.275.
- (4) Official text reads; "universe" (yu-zhou); SW I, p.311; XJ I, p.275.
- (5) Official text reads; "conception" (jian-jie); SW I, p.312; XJ I, p.275.
- (6) Addition in official text;
"Lenin said:
The two basic (or two possible ? or two historically observable ?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, and development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).
Here Lenin was referring to these two different world outlooks." SW I, p.312; XJ I, p.275.
- (7) Official text reads; "In China another name for metaphysics is xuan-xue. For a long period in history whether in China or in Europe, this way of thinking, which is part and parcel of the idealist world outlook, occupied a dominant position in human thought. In Europe, the materialism of the bourgeoisie in its early days was also metaphysical. As the social economy of many European countries advanced to the stage of highly developed capitalism, as the forces of production, the class struggle and the science developed to a level unprecedented in history, and as the industrial proletariat became the greatest motive force in historical development, there arose the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. Then, in addition to open and bare-faced reactionary idealism, vulgar evolutionism emerged among the bourgeoisie to oppose materialist dialectics.

The metaphysical or vulgar evolutionist world outlook sees things as isolated, static and one-sided. It regards all things in the universe, their forms and their species, as eternally isolated from one another and immutable. Such change as there is can only be an increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place. Moreover, the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but outside them, that is, the motive force is external. Metaphysicians hold that all the different kinds of things in the universe and all their characteristics have been the same ever since they first came into being. All subsequent changes have simply been increases or decreases in quantity. They contend that a thing can only keep on repeating itself as the same kind of thing and cannot change into anything different. In their opinion, capitalist exploitation..." SW I, p.312; XJ I, p.275-6.
- (8) Official text reads; "...searches in an over-simplified way..."; SW I, p.312; XJ I, p. 276.
- (9) Official text reads; "deny"; SW I, p.313; XJ I, p. 276.
- (10) Zi-ran jue-dui bu-bian-lun.
- (11) Official text reads; "In Europe, this mode of thinking existed as mechanical materialism in the 17th and 18th centuries and as vulgar evolutionism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. In China, there was the metaphysical thinking exemplified in the saying "Heaven changeth not, likewise the Dao changeth not", and it was supported by the decadent feudal ruling classes for a long time. Mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism, which are imported from Europe in the last hundred years, are supported by the bourgeoisie." SW I, p.313; XJ I, p.276.
- (12) Shi wu de zi-dong; this has been replaced in the official text by "while each thing in its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it." SW I, p. 313; XJ I, p.276.
- (13) Bei-dong-lun; I have followed the official translation, although "theory of passivity" might be more appropriate. SW I, p.313; XJ I, p.277.
- (14) Addition in official text; "...and why one thing changes into another." SW I, p.313; XJ I, p.277.
- (15) Official text reads; "...chiefly (zhu-yao) the result of..."; SW I, p.313; XJ I, p.277.
- (16) Official text reads; "Imperialist Russia..."; SW I, p.313; XJ I, p.277.

- (17) Official text reads; "Long dominated by feudalism, China has undergone great changes in the last hundred years and is now changing in the direction of a new China, liberated and free, and yet no change has occurred in her geography and climate. Changes do take place in the geography and climate of the earth as a whole and in every part of it, but they are insignificant when compared with changes in society; geographical and climatic changes manifest themselves in terms of tens or thousands of years, while social changes manifest themselves in thousands, hundreds or tens of years, and even in a few months in times of revolution." SW I, p.314; XJ I, p. 277.
- (18) Official text reads; "According to materialist dialectics, changes in nature are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in nature"; SW I, p.314; XJ I, p. 277.
- (19) Addition in official text; "chiefly" (zhu-yao); SW I, p.314; XJ I, p. 277.
- (20) Addition in official text; "... and the contradiction between the old and the new..."; SW I, p.314; XJ I, p.277.
- (21) Official text reads; "it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new." SW I, p.314; XJ I, p.277.
- (22) Official text reads; "...materialist dialectics..."; SW I, p.314; XJ I, p.277.
- (23) Official text reads; "...become operative (zuo-yong)."; SW I, p.314; XJ I, p.278.
- (24) Official text reads; "In China in 1927...."; SW I, p.314; XJ I, p.278.
- (25) Addition in official text; "When we liquidated this opportunism, the Chinese revolution resumed its advance. Later, the Chinese revolution again suffered severe setbacks at the hands of the enemy, because adventurism had arisen within our party. When we liquidated this adventurism, our cause advanced once again. Thus it can be seen that to lead..."; SW I, p. 315; XJ I, p.278.
- (26) Official version reads; "...a political party must depend on the correctness of its own political line..."; SW I, p. 315; XJ I, p.278.
- (27) This quote from Su Dongpo (1036-1101 A.D.) comes from Fan Zeng Lun (On Fan Zeng).
- (28) Analects, Book XII, Chapter IV. I have used Legge's translation; see The Four Books (Hong Kong: Wei Tung Book Store, 1973), p.95.
- (29) Mao also uses this quote in the original text of On Protracted War (1938); see Mao Zedong Ji, Vol. VI, p.138.
- (30) There appears to be a typographical error here; the negative bu has been replaced by a comma.
- (31) Mao is referring here to the conflicts of the transcendental ideas from the Critique of Pure Reason; see Theodore Meyer Greene (ed.), Kant: Selections (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), pp. 189-200.
- (32) Addition in official text; "For convenience of exposition, I shall deal first with the universality of contradiction and then proceed to the particularity of contradiction. The reason is that the universality of contradiction can be explained more briefly, for it has been widely recognized ever since the materialist-dialectical world outlook was discovered and materialist dialectics applied with outstanding success to analysing many aspects of human history and natural history and to changing many aspects of society and nature (as in the Soviet Union) by the great creators and continuers of Marxism---Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; whereas the particularity of contradiction is still not clearly understood by many comrades, and especially by the dogmatists. They do not understand that it is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides. Nor do they understand how important is the study of the particularity of contradiction in the concrete things confronting us for guiding the course of revolutionary practice. Therefore, it is necessary to stress the study of the particularity of contradiction and to explain it at adequate length. For this reason, in our analysis of the law of contradiction in things, we shall first analyse the universality of contradiction, then place special stress on analysing the particularity of contradiction, and finally return to the universality of contradiction.
- The universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a twofold meaning. One is that contradiction exists in the process of development of all things, and the other is that in the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end." SW I, p.315-6; XJ I, pp.279-280.
- (33) Official text reads; "There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist." SW I, p.316; XJ I, p.280.

- (34) Addition in official text; "Engels explained the universality of contradiction as follows:
- If simple mechanical change of place contains a contradiction, this is even more true of the higher forms of motion of matter, and especially of organic life and its development. ...life consists precisely and primarily in this---that a being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is therefore also a contradiction which is present in things and processes themselves, and which constantly originates and resolves itself; and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end, and death steps in. We likewise saw that also in the sphere of thought we could not escape contradictions, and that for example the contradiction between man's inherently unlimited capacity for knowledge and its actual presence only in men who are externally limited and possess limited cognition finds its solution in what is---at least practically, for us---an endless succession of generations, in infinite progress.
- ...one of the basic principles of higher mathematics is the contradiction that in certain circumstances straight lines and curves may be the same....
- But even lower mathematics teems with contradictions." SW I, pp.316-7; XJ I, pp.280-1.
- (35) This and the next three paragraphs have been replaced in the official text with a direct quote from Lenin which reads:
- "Lenin illustrated the universality of contradiction as follows:
- In mathematics: + and -. Differential and integral.
- In mechanics: action and reaction.
- In physics: positive and negative electricity.
- In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.
- In social science the class struggle." SW I, p.317; XJ I, p.281.
- (36) Official text reads; "...pushes its development forward and solves its problems." SW I, p.317; XJ I, p.281.
- (37) Official text reads; "...pushes forward the development of thought, and ceaselessly solves problems in man's thinking." SW I, p. 317; XJ I, p.281.
- (38) Official text reads; "Thus it is already clear that contradiction..."; SW I, p.317; XJ I, p.281.
- (39) Official text reads; "But does contradiction also exist at the initial stage of each process? Is there a movement of opposites from beginning to end in the process of development of every single thing?" SW I, pp.317-8; XJ I, p.281.
- (40) Mao repeats this sentence in the next paragraph, but one has been deleted from the official text; SW I, p.318; XJ I, pp.281-2.
- (41) Official text reads; "As can be seen from the articles written by Soviet philosophers criticizing it, the Deborin school maintains that contradiction..."; SW I, p.318; XJ I, p.281. Compare footnote (2) above.
- (42) Official text reads; "...between the kulaks and the peasants..."; SW I, p. 318; XJ I, p. 282.
- (43) The Chinese rendering of this name is Guo lie fu. It is difficult to be certain whether this is actually referring to Gorev, who was a leading Russian Marxist under Stalin.
- (44) Official text reads; "...social conditions..."; SW I, p.318; XJ I, p.282.
- (45) A clause has been added to the official text here which reads; "...the workers and the peasants have established a firm alliance in the course of socialist construction and are gradually resolving this contradiction in the course of the advance from socialism to communism." SW I, p.318; XJ I p. 282.
- (46) There is no paragraph break here as there is in the official text.
- (47) Addition in official text; "The old process ends and the new one begins." SW I, p.318; XJ I, p.282.
- (48) Ying-yong; official text uses the word "analysis" (fen-xi); SW I, p.318; XJ I, p.282.
- (49) Official text reads; "...process of development of things..."; SW I, p. 318-9; XJ I, p.282.
- (50) Same addition as footnote (49).

- (51) In this and the following quote, I have reproduced the official translation, although the Chinese in the original text does differ in some minor respects from that shown in the original text.
- (52) Yi-fa was a method of writing advocated by the Tong Cheng school in the Qing dynasty. It was characterized by austere simplicity, and an emphasis on utilizing ancient styles. There is something of a play on words in Mao's use of this Chinese term; he compares the yi-fa of the Tong Cheng school with the yan-jiu fa (method of study) of Marxism.
- (53) Addition in official text; "Chinese Communists must learn this method; only then will they be able correctly to analyse history and the present state of the Chinese revolution and infer its future." SW I, p.319; XJ I, p.283.
- (54) Same addition as footnote (49).
- (55) Same addition as footnote (49).
- (56) No paragraph break here as in official text; SW I, p. 319; XJ I, p.283.
- (57) Addition in official text; "...and this motion must assume certain forms." SW I, p.319; XJ I, p.283.
- (58) Addition in official text; "It is the internal cause or, as it may be called, the basis for the immense variety of things in the world." SW I, p.320; XJ I, p.284.
- (59) Official text reads; "...classes and class struggle..."; SW I, p.320; XJ I, p.284.
- (60) Yan-jiu; official text has "understand" (ren-shi); SW I, p.320; XJ I, p.284.
- (61) Addition in official text; "or universal basis..."; SW I, p.320; XJ I, p.284.
- (62) Addition in official text; "...or particular basis..."; SW I, p.320; XJ I, p.284.
- (63) There is an important addition here in the official text dealing with Mao's epistemology. It reads;
- "As regard the sequence in the movement of man's knowledge there is always a gradual growth from the knowledge of individual and particular things to the knowledge of things in general. Only after man knows the particular essence of many different things can he proceed to generalization and know the common essence of things. When man attains the knowledge of this common essence, he uses it as a guide and proceeds to study various concrete things which have not yet been studied, or studied thoroughly, and to discover the particular essence of each; only thus is he able to supplement, enrich and develop his knowledge of their common essence and prevent such knowledge from withering or petrifying. These are the two processes of cognition; one, from the particular to the general, and the other from the general to the particular. Thus cognition always moves in cycles and (so long as scientific method is strictly adhered to) each cycle advances human knowledge a step higher and so makes it more and more profound. Where our dogmatists err on this question is that, on the one hand, they do not understand that we have to study the particularity of contradiction and know the particular essence of individual things before we can adequately know the universality of contradiction and the common essence of things, and that, on the other hand, they do not understand that after knowing the common essence of things, we must go further and study the concrete things that have not yet been thoroughly studied or have only just emerged. Our dogmatists are lazy-bones. They refuse to undertake any painstaking study of concrete things, they regard general truths as emerging out of the void, they turn them into purely abstract unfathomable formulas, and thereby completely deny and reverse the normal sequence by which man comes to know truth. Nor do they understand the interconnection of the two processes in cognition--from the particular to the general and then from the general to the particular. They understand nothing of the Marxist theory of knowledge." SW I, pp.320-1; XJ I, pp.284-5.
- (64) Addition in official text; "...which is real (and not imaginary)..."; SW I, p.321; XJ I, p.285.
- (65) Addition in official text; "...and start from..."; SW I, p.321; XJ I, p.285.
- (66) Addition in official text; "...revolutionary..."; SW I, p.322; XJ I, p.286.
- (67) The last two clauses are in reverse order in the official text; SW I, pp.321-2; XJ I, p.286.
- (68) Official text reads; "...working class..."; SW I, p.322; XJ I, p.286.
- (69) Official text reads; "...and the peasant class in socialist society is resolved by the method of collectivization and mechanization in agriculture." SW I, p.322; XJ I, p.286.
- (70) Official text reads; "...criticism and self-criticism"; SW I, p.322; XJ I, p.286.

- (71) Addition in official text; "...as well as between the methods used to resolve them. The principle of using different methods to resolve different contradictions is one which Marxist-Leninists must strictly observe. The dogmatists do not observe this principle; they do not understand that conditions differ in different kinds of revolution and so do not understand that different methods should be used to resolve different contradictions; on the contrary, they invariably adopt what they imagine to be an unalterable formula and arbitrarily apply it everywhere, which only causes setbacks to the revolution or makes a sorry mess of what was originally well done." SW I, p.322; XJ I, p.286.
- (72) Addition in official text; "...in the development of a thing..."; SW I, p.322; XJ I, p.286.
- (73) Official text reads; "This likewise requires the utmost attention in our study." SW I, p.322; XJ I, p.286.
- (74) Official text reads; "There are many contradictions in the course of development of any major thing." SW I, p.322; XJ I, p.286.
- (75) Official text reads; "...urban petty bourgeoisie..."; SW I, p.322; XJ I, p.286.
- (76) Official text reads; "...reactionary ruling groups..."; SW I, p.322; XJ I, p.286.
- (77) Addition in official text; "...and in its contradiction..."; SW I, p.323; XJ I, p.287.
- (78) Addition in official text; "...and in contradiction..."; SW I, p.323; XJ I, p.287.
- (79) Addition in official text; "Lenin meant just this when he said that the most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Our dogmatists have violated Lenin's teachings; they never use their brains to analyse anything concretely, and in their writings and speeches they always use stereotypes devoid of content, thereby creating a very bad style of work in our Party." SW I, p.323; XJ I, p.287.
- (80) Official text reads; "I have discussed this in my essay 'On Practice'". SW I, p.323; XJ I, p.287. 'On Practice' appears pp.40-57 of Bian-zheng-fa Wei-wu lun (Da-zhong Shu-dian: Dalian, n.d.).
- (81) Official text reads; "...only the past but not the future..." SW I, p.323; XJ I, p.287.
- (82) Addition in official text; "...only individual parts but not the whole..."; SW I, p.323; XJ I, p.287.
- (83) Addition in official text; "revolutionary"; SW I, p.323; XJ I, p.287.
- (84) Same addition as footnote (83)
- (85) Addition in official text; "...seeing the trees but not the forest." SW I, p.323; XJ I, p.288.
- (86) Mao uses the name Wei Zheng in the official text; SW I, p.323; XJ I, p.288.
- (87) Mao uses the name Song Jiang in the official text; SW I, p.324; XJ I, p.288.
- (88) Addition in official text; "...using a strategem similar to that of the Trojan Horse in the foreign story." SW I, p.324; XJ I, p.288.
- (89) Addition in official text; "Lenin said:
...in order really to know an object we must embrace, study, all its sides, all connections and "mediations". We shall never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity." SW I, p.324; XJ I, p.288.
- (90) Addition in official text; "The reason the dogmatist and empiricist comrades in China have made mistakes lies precisely in their subjectivist, one-sided and superficial way of looking at things. To be one-sided and superficial is at the same time to be subjective. For all objective things are actually interconnected and are governed by inner laws, but instead of undertaking the task of reflecting things as they really are some people only look at things one-sidedly or superficially and who know neither their interconnections nor their inner laws, and so their method is subjectivist." SW I, p.324; XJ I, pp.288-9.
- (91) Addition in official text; "...in the development of a thing..."; SW I, p. 324; XJ I, p.289.
- (92) No paragraph break here as in official text; SW I, p.325; XJ I, p.289.
- (93) Same addition as footnote (91)
- (94) Official text reads; "...but in a lengthy process the conditions usually differ at each stage." SW I, p.325; XJ I, p.289.

- (95) Same addition as footnote (91).
- (96) Addition in official text; "...in a lengthy process." SW I, p.325; XJ I, p.289.
- (97) Addition in official text; "...or influenced by..."; SW I, p.325; XJ I, p.289.
- (98) Addition in official text; "If people do not pay attention to the stages in the process of development of a thing, they cannot deal with its contradictions properly." SW I, p.325; XJ I, p.289.
- (99) Official text reads; "...when the capitalism of the era of free competition developed into imperialism..."; SW I, p.325; XJ I, p.289.
- (100) Addition in official text; "...class..."; SW I, p.325; XJ I, p.289.
- (101) Official text reads; "...manifested itself with particular sharpness..."; SW I, p.325; XJ I, p.289.
- (102) Addition in official text; "Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution precisely because Lenin and Stalin have correctly explained these contradictions and correctly formulated the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution for their resolution." SW I, p.325; XJ I, p.289.
- (103) Official text reads; "...bourgeois-democratic revolution..."; SW I, p.325; XJ I, p.289.
- (104) Addition in official text; "In particular, the revolution in its period of bourgeois leadership and the revolution in its period of proletarian leadership represent two vastly different historical stages. In other words, proletarian leadership has fundamentally changed the whole face of the revolution, has brought about a new alignment of classes, given rise to a tremendous upsurge in the peasant revolution, imparted thoroughness to the revolution against imperialism and feudalism, created the possibility of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, and so on. None of these was possible in the period when the revolution was under bourgeois leadership." SW I, pp.325-6; XJ I, p.290.
- (105) Official text reads; "...nonetheless this process has..."; SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (106) Official text reads; "...several..."; SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (107) Official text reads; "...the revolution of 1924-27,..."; SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (108) Official text reads; "...new warlords..."; SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (109) Official text reads; "...the Agrarian Revolutionary War..."; SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (110) Official text reads; "...the second national united front and the War of Resistance Against Japan." SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (111) Official text reads; "... (e.g., the Agrarian Revolutionary War and the Japanese invasion of the four northeastern provinces), ..."; SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (112) Official text reads; "...the loss of our revolutionary base areas in the South)." SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (113) Official text reads; " ...in the process of development of a thing..."; SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (114) Official text reads; "...we must not only observe..."; SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (115) Addition in official text; "...of each contradiction." SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (116) Addition in official text; "...carried out Sun Yat-sen's Three Great Policies of alliance with Russia, co-operation with the Communist Party, and assistance to the peasant and workers; hence it was..."; SW I, p.326; XJ I, p.290.
- (117) Addition in official text; "...and become a reactionary bloc of the landlords and big bourgeoisie." SW I, pp.326-7; XJ I, pp.290-1.
- (118) Official text reads; "After the Xian Incident in December 1936, it began another change in the direction of ending the civil war and co-operating with the Communist Party for joint opposition to Japanese imperialism." SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (119) Official text reads; "...Chinese Communist Party." SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (120) Official text reads; "it courageously led the revolution of 1924-27 but..."; SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (121) Official text reads; "...and consequently it became possible for Chen Duxiuism, which appeared during the latter part of this revolution, to assert itself and bring about the defeat of the revolution." SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.

- (122) Official text reads; "After 1927, the Communist Party courageously led the Agrarian Revolutionary War and created the revolutionary army and revolutionary base areas." SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (123) Official text reads; "...it committed adventurist errors which brought about very great losses both to the army and to the base areas." SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (124) Addition in official text; "...has corrected these errors and has been..."; SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (125) Addition in official text; "...for resistance to Japan; this great struggle is now developing. At the present stage, the Communist Party is a Party that has gone through the test of two revolutions and acquired a wealth of experience. Such have been the particular features of the Chinese Communist Party in the three stages." SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (126) Official text reads; "...the establishment of a united front..."; SW I, p. 327; XJ I, p.291.
- (127) Official text reads; "...the establishment of another united front." SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (128) Addition in official text; "...for the study of the particular features of the two parties is the examination of the class basis of the two parties and the ..."; SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (129) Addition in official text; "...at different periods." SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (130) Addition in official text; "...in the period of its first co-operation with the Communist Party,..."; SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (131) Addition in official text; "...and was therefore anti-imperialist..."; SW I, p.327; XJ I, p.291.
- (132) Addition in official text; "...---although in words it promised many benefits to the working people, in fact it gave them little or nothing. In the period when it carried on the anti-Communist war, the Guomindang collaborated with imperialism and feudalism against the great masses of the people and wiped out all the gains they had won in the revolution, and thereby intensified its contradictions with them. In the present period of the anti-Japanese war, the Guomindang stands in contradiction to Japanese imperialism and wants co-operation with the Communist Party, without however relaxing its struggle against the Communist Party, and the people or its oppression of them. As for the Communist Party..."; SW I, pp.327-8; XJ I, pp.291-2.
- (133) Official text reads; "As for the Communist Party, it has always, in every period, stood with the great masses of the people against imperialism and feudalism..."; SW I, p.328; XJ I, p.292.
- (134) Addition in official text; "...but in the present period of the anti-Japanese war, it has adopted a moderate policy towards the Guomindang and the domestic feudal forces because the Guomindang has expressed itself in favour of resisting Japan." SW I, p.328; XJ I, p.292.
- (135) Official text reads; "The above circumstances have resulted now in alliance between the two parties and now in struggle between them, and even during the periods of alliance there has been a complicated state of simultaneous alliance and struggle." SW I, p.328; XJ I, p.292.
- (136) Addition in official text; "We must always remember Lenin's words, the concrete analysis of concrete conditions." SW I, p.328; XJ I, p.292.
- (137) Addition in official text; "...were the first to..."; SW I, p.328; XJ I, p.292.
- (138) Addition in official text; "...in things..."; SW I, p.328; XJ I, p.292.
- (139) Official text reads; "...they discovered the contradiction between the exploiting and exploited classes and also the ..."; SW I, p.328; XJ I, p.292.
- (140) Addition in official text; "...and they discovered how these contradictions inevitably lead to different kinds of social revolution in different kinds of class society." SW I, p.328; XJ I, p.292.
- (141) A major addition in the official text here, which reads as follows:

"Because the range of things is vast and there is no limit to their development, what is universal is one context becomes particular in another. Conversely, what is particular in one context becomes universal in another. The contradiction in the capitalist system between the social character of production and the private ownership of the means of production is common to all countries

where capitalism exists and develops; as far as capitalism is concerned, this constitutes the universality of contradiction. But this contradiction of capitalism belongs only to a certain historical stage in the general development of class society; as far as the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society as a whole is concerned, it constitutes the particularity of contradiction. However, in the course of dissecting the particularity of all these contradictions in capitalist society, Marx gave a still more profound, more adequate and more complete elucidation of the universality of the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society in general.

Since the particular is united with the universal and since the universality as well as the particularity of contradiction is inherent in everything, universality residing in particularity, we should, when studying an object, try to discover both the particular and the universal and their interconnection, to discover both particularity and universality and also their interconnections within the object itself, and to discover the interconnections of this object with the many objects outside it. When Stalin explained the historical roots of Leninism in his famous work, The Foundations of Leninism, he analysed the international situation in which Leninism arose, analysed those contradictions of capitalism which reached their culmination under imperialism, and showed how these contradictions made proletarian revolution a matter for immediate action and created favourable condition for a direct onslaught on capitalism. What is more, he analysed the reasons why Russia became the cradle of Leninism, why tsarist Russia became the focus of all the contradictions of imperialism, and why it was possible for the Russian proletariat to become the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. Thus, Stalin analysed the universality of contradiction in imperialism, showing why Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, and at the same time analysed the particularity of tsarist Russian imperialism within this general contradiction, showing why Russia became the birthplace of the theory and tactics of proletarian revolution and how the universality of contradiction is contained in this particularity. Stalin's analysis provides us with a model for understanding the particularity and the universality of contradiction and their interconnection." SW I, pp.329-330; XJ I, pp.293-4.

- (142) Addition in official text; "...and likewise Lenin and Stalin always enjoin people not to be ..."; SW I, p.330; XJ I, p.294.
- (143) Addition in official text; "Our dogmatists do not have this attitude in study and therefore can never get anything right." SW I, p.330; XJ I, p.294.
- (144) Addition in official text; "...each..."; SW I, p.330; XJ I, p.294.
- (145) Official text reads; "It is because each contradiction is particular that individual character arises. All individual character exists conditionally and temporarily, and hence is relative." SW I, p.330; XJ I, pp.294-5.
- (146) This quotation from Su Dongpo is taken from the first of two prose poems entitled Chi bi fu (Fu on the Red Cliff). For the context in which Su Dongpo wrote these beautiful poems and an alternative translation of the quotation, see Lin Yutang, The Gay Genius: The Life and Times of Su Tungpo (Melbourne, London, and Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1948), pp.197-204, esp. p.202; for two alternate translations, see C.D. Le Gros Clark, Selections from the Works of Su Tung-p'o (London: Jonathon Cape, 1931), pp.48-51; and Burton Watson, Su Tung-p'o: Selections from a Sung Dynasty Poet (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965), p.89.
- (147) Official text reads; "...of the problem of contradiction in things; failure to understand it is tantamount to abandoning dialectics." SW I, p.330; XJ I, p.295.
- (148) Official text reads; "...in the process of development of a complex thing..."; SW I, p.331; XJ I, p.295.
- (149) Addition in official text; "...two forces in..." ; SW I, p.331; XJ I, p.295.
- (150) Official text reads; "The other contradictions..."; SW I, p.331; XJ I, p.295.
- (151) Official text reads; "... remnant feudal classes..." SW I, p.331; XJ I, p.295.
- (152) Official text reads; "...monopoly..." ; SW I, p.331; XJ I, p.295.
- (153) Official text reads; "...bourgeois..."; SW I, p.331; XJ I, p.295.
- (154) Addition in official text; "...except for some traitors..."; SW I, p.331; XJ I, p.295.
- (155) Official text reads; "...of 1840, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, and the Yi He Tuan War of 1900..."; SW I, p.331; XJ I, p.296.
- (156) Official text reads; "...while imperialism often employs indirect methods rather than direct action in helping the reactionaries in the semi-colonial countries to oppress the people,..."; SW I, p.332; XJ I, p.296.

- (157) Official text reads; "This is what happened in China in the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, and the ten years of Agrarian Revolutionary War after 1927." SW I, p.332; XJ I, p.296.
- (158) Official text reads; "Wars among the various reactionary ruling groups in the semi-colonial countries, e.g., the war amongs the warlords in China, fall into the same category." SW I, p.332; XJ I, p.296.
- (159) Addition in official text; "...revolutionary..."; SW I, p.332; XJ I, p.296.
- (160) Official text reads; "...reactionaries..."; SW I, p.332; XJ I, p.296.
- (161) Same alteration as footnote (160)
- (162) Official text reads; "At such a time, foreign imperialism and domestic reaction stand quite openly at one pole while the masses of the people stand at the other pole..."; SW I, p.332; XJ I, p.296.
- (163) Addition in official text; "...thus forming the principal contradiction which determines or influences the development of the other contradictions. The assistance given by various capitalist countries to the Russian reactionaries after the October Revolution is an example of armed intervention. Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal in 1927 is an example of splitting the revolutionary front." SW I, p.332; XJ I, p.297.
- (164) Addition in official text; "...complex process..."; SW I, p.332; XJ I, p.297.
- (165) Official text reads; "Likewise Lenin and Stalin taught us this method when they studied imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism and when they studied the Soviet economy." SW I, p.332; XJ I, p.297.
- (166) Addition in official text; "The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction, the aspect which has gained the dominant position." SW I, p.333; XJ I, p.297.
- (167) Addition in official text; "...and the nature of the thing changes accordingly." SW I, p.333; XJ I, p.297.
- (168) Official text reads; "----a change determined by the extent of the increase or decrease in the force of each aspect in its struggle against the other in the course of the development of a thing." SW I, p.333; XJ I, p.297.
- (169) This paragraph has been deleted from the official text, and the following one inserted in its place:

"We often speak of "the new superseding the old". The supersession of the old by the new is a general, eternal and inviolable law of the universe. The transformation of one thing into another, through leaps of different forms in accordance with its essence and external conditions--- this is the process of the new superseding the old. In each thing there is contradiction between its new and its old aspects, and this gives rise to a series of struggles with many twists and turns. As a result of these struggles, the new aspect changes from being minor to being major and rises to predominance, while and old aspect changes from being major to being minor and gradually dies out. And the moment the new aspect gains dominance over the old, the old thing changes qualitatively into a new thing. It can thus be seen that the nature of a thing is mainly determined by the principal aspect of the contradiction, the aspect which has gained predominance. When the principal aspect which has gained predominance changes, the nature of a thing changes accordingly." SW I, p.333; XJ I, pp.297-8.

- (170) Official text reads; "...in the old feudal era to being the dominant force, and the nature of society has accordingly changed from feudal to capitalist. In the new, capitalist era, the feudal forces changed from their former dominant position to a subordinate one, gradually dying out." SW I, pp.333-4; XJ I, p.298.
- (171) This, and the next four paragraphs, have been deleted from the official text, and replaced by the following passage:

"Such was the case, for example, in Britain and France. With the development of the productive forces, the bourgeoisie changes from being a new class playing a progressive role to being an old class playing a reactionary role, until it is finally overthrown by the proletariat and becomes a class deprived of privately owned means of production and stripped of power, when it, too, gradually dies out. The proletariat, which is much more numerous than the bourgeoisie and grows simultaneously with it but under its rule, is a new force which, initially subordinate to the bourgeoisie, gradually gains strength, becomes an independent class playing the leading role in history, and finally seizes political power and becomes the ruling class. Thereupon the nature of society changes and the old capitalist society becomes the new socialist society. This is the path already taken by the Soviet Union, a path that all other countries will inevitably take.

Look at China, for instance. Imperialism occupies the principal position in the contradiction in which China has been reduced to a semi-colony, it oppresses the

Chinese people, and China has been changed from an independent country into a semi-colonial one. But this state of affairs will inevitably change; in the struggle between the two sides, the power of the Chinese people which is growing under the leadership of the proletariat will inevitably change China from a semi-colony into an independent country, whereas imperialism will be overthrown and old China will inevitably change into New China.

The change of old China into New China also involves a change in the relation between the old feudal forces and the new popular forces within the country. The old feudal landlord class will be overthrown, and from being the ruler it will change into being the ruled; and this class, too, will gradually die out. From being the ruled the people, led by the proletariat, will become the rulers. Thereupon, the nature of Chinese society will change and the old, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society will change into a new democratic society.

Instances of such reciprocal transformation are found in our past experience. The Qing Dynasty which ruled China for nearly three hundred years was overthrown in the Revolution of 1911, and the revolutionary Tong Meng Hui under Sun Yat-sen's leadership was victorious for a time. In the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, the revolutionary forces of the Communist-Guomindang alliance in the south changed from being weak to being strong and won victory in the Northern Expedition, while the Northern warlords who once ruled the roost were overthrown. In 1927, the people's forces led by the Communist Party were greatly reduced numerically under the attacks of Guomindang reaction, but with the elimination of opportunism within their ranks they gradually grew again. In the revolutionary base areas under Communist leadership, the peasants have been transformed from being the ruled to being the rulers, while the landlords have undergone a reverse transformation. It is always so in the world, the new displacing the old, the old being superseded by the new, the old being eliminated to make way for the new, and the new emerging out of the old." SW I, pp.334-5; XJ I, pp.298-9.

- (172) Official text reads; "...thus a difficult situation yields place to a favourable one." SW I, p.335; XJ I, p.299.
- (173) Addition in official text; "...in China..."; SW I, p.335; XJ I, p.299.
- (174) Addition in official text; "...Chinese..."; SW I, p.335; XJ I, p.299.
- (175) Official text reads; "... but we can change this and fundamentally transform the situation as between China and Japan." SW I, p.335; XJ I, p.299.
- (176) Official text reads; "...1924-27..."; SW I, p.335; XJ I, p.299.
- (177) Official text reads; "The revolutionary base areas which grew up in the southern provinces after 1927 had all suffered defeat by 1934." SW I, p.335; XJ I, pp.299-300.
- (178) Official text reads; "At the very beginning of our study of Marxism, our ignorance of or scanty acquaintance with Marxism stands in contradiction to knowledge of Marxism." SW I, p.335; XJ I, p.300.
- (179) Addition in official text; "...and blindness in the application of Marxism into mastery of its application." SW I, p.335; XJ I, p.300.
- (180) Addition in official text; "This is the mechanical materialist conception, not the dialectical materialist conception. True..."; SW I, p.336; XJ I, p.300.
- (181) Official text reads; "...in certain conditions..." ; SW I, p.336; XJ I, p.300.
- (182) Addition in official text; "...and social being determines social consciousness..."; SW I, p.336; XJ I, p.300.
- (183) Addition in official text; "...of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base." SW I, p.336; XJ I, p.301.
- (184) Addition in official text; "...of contradiction..."; SW I, p.336; XJ I, p.301.
- (185) Addition in official text; "...of the forces..."; SW I, p.336; XJ I, p.301.
- (186) Addition in official text; "Moreover, it is these concrete features of a contradiction and the changes in the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction in the course of its development that manifest the force of the new superseding the old." SW I, pp.336-7; XJ I, p.301.
- (187) Official text reads; "All Communists must give it attention"; SW I, pp.337; XJ I, p.301.
- (188) Official text reads; "The Identity and Struggle of the Aspects of a Contradiction." SW I, p.337; XJ I, p.301.
- (189) Official text reads; "When we understand the..."; SW I, p.337; XJ I, p.301.
- (190) Addition in official text; "...the aspects of..."; SW I, p.337; XJ I, p.301.

- (191) Official text reads: "...the process of the development of a thing..."; SW I, p.337; XJ I, p.301.
- (192) Addition in official text; "...exclude each other, struggle with each other and..."; SW I, p.337; XJ I, p.302.
- (193) Official text reads; "Without exception, they are contained in the process of development of all things and in all human thought." SW I, p.337; XJ I, p.302.
- (194) In this and subsequent passages, Mao frequently utilizes the expression yuan-jia (enemy, antagonist, adversary) to indicate opposites. This has been replaced by mao-dun in the official text. I have followed the official translation, as the discrepancy is literary rather than substantive.
- (195) Addition in official text; "...in the objective world and all human thought are..."; SW I, p.338; XJ I, p.302.
- (196) Addition in official text; "Without landlords there would be no tenant-peasants; without tenant-peasants, there would be no landlords." SW I, p.338; XJ I, p.302.
- (197) Official text reads; "Without imperialist oppression of nations, there would be no colonies or semi-colonies; without colonies or semi-colonies, there would be no imperialist oppression of nations." SW I, p.338; XJ I, p.302.
- (198) Official text reads; "...all contradictory aspects..."; SW I, p.338; XJ I, p.303.
- (199) Official text reads; "...dialectics studies "how opposites can be ...identical". SW I, p.338; XJ I, p.303.
- (200) Official text reads; "That is to say, in given conditions..."; SW I, p.338; XJ I, p.303.
- (201) Official text reads; "You see, by means of revolution the proletariat, at one time the ruled, is transformed into the ruler, while the bourgeoisie, the erstwhile ruler, is transformed into the ruled and changes its position to that originally occupied by its opposite." SW I, pp.338-9; XJ I, p.303.
- (202) Official text reads; "The Guomindang, which played a certain positive role at a certain stage in modern Chinese history, became a counter-revolutionary party after 1927 because of its inherent class nature and because of imperialist blandishments (these being the conditions); SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.303.
- (203) Official text reads; "...to agree to resist Japan..."; SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.303.
- (204) Official text reads: "...a definite identity." SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.303.
- (205) Official text reads; "there is identity of the two sides." SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.304.
- (206) Official text reads; "...as it will take place everywhere else." SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.304.
- (207) Addition in official text; "...or transformation into each other..."; SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.304.
- (208) Addition in official text; "...or the dictatorship of the people..." ; SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.304.
- (209) Official text reads; "...the higher stage when all state systems are eliminated." SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.304.
- (210) Addition in official text; "...under the leadership of the Communist Party..."; SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.304.
- (211) Official text reads; "War and peace, as everybody knows, transform themselves into each other." SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.304.
- (212) Official text reads; "...the post-war peace..."; SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.304.
- (213) Official text reads; "...and the civil war in China has now stopped, giving place to internal peace." SW I, p.339; XJ I, p.304.
- (214) Official text reads; "...for instance, the Guomindang-Communist co-operation was transformed into war in 1927, and today's situation of world peace may be transformed into a second world war." SW I, p.340; XJ I, p.304.
- (215) Addition in official text; "...in class society such contradictory things as war and peace have an..."; SW I, p.340; XJ I, p.304.
- (216) Characters from the Romance of the Three Kingdoms.
- (217) Although Mao has separated these two sentences with quotation marks, they are part of the same quotation from the Kong zi jia yu, Book VI.

- (218) This quotation is from Lao Zi, Chapter 58. I have followed Lau's translation; See Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, trans. D.C. Lau (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), p.119.
- (219) This quote comes from the Da xue (The Great Learning), commentary of the philosopher Zeng, Chapter VIII. I have adapted Legge's translation. Mao uses the quote out of context and the full passage runs:
- "What is meant by "The regulation of one's family depends on the cultivation of his person", is this:---Men are partial where they feel affection and love; partial where they despise and dislike, partial where they stand in awe and reverence; partial where they feel sorrow and compassion; partial where they are arrogant and rude. Thus it is that there are few men in the world who love (hao; Mao uses ai) and at the same time know the bad qualities of the object of their love, or who hate and yet know the excellences of the object of their hatred." (The Four Books. Op.cit., 10-11)
- However, the exact meaning of this saying is not clear even in context. An alternative translation might be; "To love so as to know hatred; to hate so as to appreciate excellence."
- (220) This is a popular Chinese saying, and is not from a classical source.
- (221) Official text reads; "...identity of opposites." SW I, p.340; XJ I, p.304.
- (222) Here, as in the following paragraph, there are no quotation marks for this reference from Lenin. These have been added to the official text. There are also some differences in the Chinese rendering of this reference, but I have remained as close as possible to the official English translation. SW I, p.340; XJ I, p.304.
- (223) Addition in official text; "Reflected in man's thinking, this becomes the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. It is only the reactionary ruling class of the past and present and the metaphysicians in their service who regard opposites not as living, conditional, mobile and transforming themselves into one another, but as dead and rigid, and they propagate this fallacy everywhere to delude the masses of the people, thus seeking to perpetuate their rule. The task of Communists is to expose the fallacies of the reactionaries and metaphysicians, to propagate the dialectics inherent in things, and so accelerate the transformation of things and achieve the goal of revolution." SW I, p.340; XJ I, p.305.
- (224) Addition in official text; "...necessary..."; SW I, p.341; XJ I, p.306.
- (225) Addition in official text; "...in 1917..."; SW I, p.341; XJ I, p.306.
- (226) Official text reads; "...bourgeois-democratic..."; SW I, p.341; XJ I, p.306.
- (227) Addition in official text; "...proletarian..."; SW I, p.341; XJ I, p.306.
- (228) Official text reads; "...bourgeois..."; SW I, p.341; XJ I, p.306.
- (229) Addition in official text; "...of 1871..."; SW I, p.341; XJ I, p.306.
- (230) Official text reads; "...without..."; SW I, p.341; XJ I, p.306.
- (231) Official text reads; "... of the Western countries, without passing through a period of bourgeois dictatorship?" SW I, p.341; XJ I, p.306.
- (232) Addition in official text; "...certain..."; SW I, p.341; XJ I, p.306.
- (233) Official text reads; "...in the process of development of things and ..."; SW I, p.341; XJ I, p.306.
- (234) The correct title of this legend is "Gua Fu's race with the Sun."
- (235) Official text reads; "In speaking of the identity of opposites in given conditions, what we are referring to is real and concrete opposites and the real and concrete transformations of opposites into one another. There are innumerable transformations in mythology, for instance, Gua Fu's race with the sun in Shan Hai Jing, Yi's shooting down of nine suns in Huai Nan Zi, the Monkey King's seventy-two metamorphoses in Xi You Ji, the numerous episodes of ghosts and foxes metamorphosed into human beings in the Strange Tales of Liao Zhai, etc. But these legendary transformations of opposites are not concrete changes reflecting concrete contradictions. They are naive, imaginery, subjectively conceived transformations conjured up in men's minds by innumerable real and complex transformations of opposites into one another. Marx said, "All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature." The myriads of changes in mythology (and also in nursery tales) delight people because they imaginatively picture man's conquest of the forces of nature, and the best myths possess "eternal charm", as Marx put it; but myths are not built out of the concrete contradictions existing in given conditions and therefore are not a scientific reflection of reality. That is to say, in myths or nursery tales the aspects constituting a contradiction have only an imaginery identity, not a concrete identity. The scientific reflection of the identity in real transformations is Marxist dialectics." SW I, pp.340-1; XJ I, p.305.

- (236) Addition in official text; "...the mutability manifested in the..."; SW I, p.342; XJ I, p.306.
- (237) Official text reads; "There are two states of motion in all things, that of relative rest and that of conspicuous change. Both are caused by the struggle between the two contradictory elements contained in a thing. When the thing is in the first state of motion, it is undergoing only quantitative and not qualitative change and consequently presents the outward appearance of being at rest. When the thing is in the second state of motion, the quantitative change of the first state has already reached a culminating point and gives rise to the dissolution of the thing as an entity and thereupon a qualitative change ensues, hence the appearance of conspicuous change. Such unity, solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity, attraction, etc., as we see in daily life, are all the appearances of things in the state of quantitative change. On the other hand, the dissolution of unity, that is, the destruction of this solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity and attraction, and the change of each into its opposite are all the appearances of things in the state of qualitative change, the transformation of one process into another. Things are constantly transforming themselves from the first into the second state of motion; the struggle of opposites goes on in both states but the contradiction is resolved through the second state. That is why we say that the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and relative, while the struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute." SW I, p.342; XJ I, pp.306-7.
- (238) Official text reads; "...the struggle between opposites..."; SW I, p.343; XJ I, p.307.
- (239) This whole section has been replaced in the official text by the following paragraph; "We Chinese often say, "Things that oppose each other also complement each other." That is, things opposed to each other have identity. This saying is dialectical and contrary to metaphysics. "Oppose each other" refers to the mutual exclusion or the struggle of two contradictory aspects. "Complement each other" means that in given conditions the two contradictory aspects unite and achieve identity. Yet struggle is inherent in identity and without struggle there can be no identity." SW I, p.343; XJ I, pp.307-8.
- (240) Addition in official text; "...in particularity there is universality, and in individuality there is generality." SW I, p.343; XJ I, p.308.
- (241) Official text reads; "Our answer is that antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites." SW I, p.343; XJ I, p.308.
- (242) Official text reads; "In human history, antagonism between classes exists as a ..."; SW I, p.343; XJ I, p.308.
- (243) Official text reads; "...and develops into revolution. The same holds for the transformation of peace into war in class society." SW I, p.343; XJ I, p.308.
- (244) Official text reads; "Before it explodes, a bomb is a single entity in which opposites coexist in given conditions. The explosion takes place only when a new condition, ignition, is present. An analogous situation arises in all those natural phenomena which finally assume the form of open conflict to resolve contradictions and produce new things." SW I, p.343; XJ I, p.308.
- (245) Addition in official text; "It is highly important to grasp this fact. It enables us to understand that revolutions and revolutionary wars are inevitable in class society and that without them, it is impossible to accomplish any leap in social development and to overthrow the reactionary ruling classes and therefore impossible for the people to win political power. Communists must expose the deceitful propaganda of the reactionaries, such as the assertion that social revolution is unnecessary and impossible. They must firmly uphold the Marxist-Leninist theory of social revolution and enable the people to understand that social revolution is not only entirely necessary but also entirely practicable, and that the whole history of mankind and the triumph of the Soviet Union have confirmed this scientific truth.

However, we must make a concrete study of the circumstances of each specific struggle of opposites and should not arbitrarily apply the formula discussed above to everything. Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions. Some contradictions are characterized by open antagonism, others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones." SW I, p.344; XJ I, p.308-9.

- (246) The Chinese reads; dou mei you dui-kang xing-tai de cun-zai. This is a most unusual statment for Mao to have made, and it is little wonder that it has been dropped from the official text. Some of the contradictions raised by Mao

obviously have an antagonistic form or condition of existence at a certain stage in their development. Perhaps what Mao meant here was that all of the contradictions he cites have a non-antagonistic (fei dui-kang) form as well as an antagonistic form of existence. This section has been almost completely rewritten in the official text, and reads as follows:

"As already mentioned, so long as classes exist, contradiction between correct and incorrect ideas in the Communist Party are reflections within the party of class contradictions. At first, with regard to certain issues, such contradictions may not manifest themselves as antagonistic. But with the development of the class struggle, they may grow and become antagonistic. The history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union shows us that the contradictions between the correct thinking of Lenin and Stalin and the fallacious thinking of Trotsky, Bukharin and others did not at first manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but that later they did develop into antagonism. There are similar cases in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. At first the contradictions between the correct thinking of many of our Party comrades and the fallacious thinking of Chen Duxiu, Zhang Guodao and others also did not manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but later they did develop into antagonism. At present the contradiction between correct and incorrect thinking in our Party does not manifest itself in an antagonistic form, and if comrades who have committed mistakes can correct them, it will not develop into antagonism. Therefore, the Party must on the one hand wage a serious struggle against erroneous thinking, and on the other give the comrades who have committed errors ample opportunity to wake up. This being the case, excessive struggle is obviously inappropriate. But if the people who have committed errors persist in them and aggravate them, there is the possibility that this contradiction will develop into antagonism.

Economically, the contradiction between town and country is an extremely antagonistic one both in capitalist society, where under the rule of the bourgeoisie the towns ruthlessly plunder the countryside, and in the Guomindang areas in China, where under the rule of foreign imperialism and the Chinese big comprador bourgeoisie the towns most rapaciously plunder the countryside. But in a socialist country and in our revolutionary base areas, this antagonistic contradiction has changed into one that is non-antagonistic; and when communist society is reached it will be abolished." SW I, pp.344-5; XJ I, pp.309-310.

- (247) Addition in official text; "That is to say, antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites; the formula of antagonism cannot be arbitrarily applied everywhere." SW I, p.345; XJ I, p.310.
- (248) In the official text, there is a new section here with the heading "VII, Conclusion"; SW I, p.345; XJ I, p.310.
- (249) Official text reads; "We may now say a few words to sum up. The law of the contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the fundamental law of nature and society and therefore also the fundamental law of thought. It represents a great revolution in the history of human knowledge." SW I, p.345; XJ I, p.310.
- (250) Official text reads; "According to dialectical materialism, contradiction is present in all processes of objectively existing things and of subjective thought and permeates all these processes from beginning to end"; SW I, p.345; XJ I, p.310.
- (251) Official text reads; "Each contradiction and each of its aspects have their respective characteristics"; SW I, p.345; XJ I, p.310.
- (252) Addition in official text; "...contradiction and the non-principal contradiction and to the distinction between the..."; SW I, p.346; XJ I, p.311.
- (253) Official text reads; "in studying the universality of contradiction and the struggle of opposites in contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the different forms of struggle. Otherwise we shall make mistakes. If, through study, we achieve a real understanding of the essentials explained above, we shall be able to demolish dogmatist ideas which are contrary to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and detrimental to our revolutionary cause, and our comrades with practical experience will be able to organize their experience into principles and avoid repeating empiricist errors. These are a few simple conclusions from our study of the law of contradiction." SW I, p.346; XJ I, p.311.

**MAO ZEDONG'S "ON CONTRADICTION" AND
"ON PRACTICE": PRE-LIBERATION TEXTS**

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Reprinted from
THE CHINA QUARTERLY, December 1980
MALET STREET, LONDON WC1E 7HP

Mao ZeDong's *On Contradiction* and *On Practice*: Pre-Liberation Texts.

Nick Knight

Despite the flood of Mao's previously unknown works released by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, no pre-liberation versions of his "celebrated philosophical essays"¹ *On Contradiction* and *On Practice* came to light from that source. This gap in the Red Guard material may have been viewed as significant, confirming suspicions held by some that there were in fact no pre-liberation versions of these essays, and showing more conclusively the mendacity of the Chinese claim that they were originally written in 1937. Arthur Cohen, perhaps the most vociferous critic of Mao's "originality" as philosopher, argued in 1964 that both essays had been written in the period 1950 to 1952, and that the Chinese claim "appears to be fraudulent."² Doolin and Golas also contest the Chinese claim that *On Contradiction* was written by Mao in 1937.³ In both cases, the motivation for this falsification of the date of composition is interpreted as being the desire to backdate Mao's status as a Marxist theoretician to the early Yan'an period. Schram⁴ and Wittfogel,⁵ however, have both accepted the possibility that *On Contradiction* and *On Practice* could have been written in 1937, while not denying that the 1950 and 1952 texts could represent heavily revised versions of earlier pieces. Schram, in fact, has argued that Mao's *Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism*, *On Practice* and *On Contradiction* belonged to "a single intellectual enterprise, namely Mao's attempt to come to terms with the philosophical basis of Marxism from the time he was first exposed to it in July 1936 until the Japanese attack of

*Grateful acknowledgment is made to George Weys of the School of Oriental and African Studies who gave generously of his time and skill in assisting with the translations appended to this article; also to Professor Stuart Schram who read and commented on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. The phrase is Edgar Snow's, see *The Long Revolution* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1971, 1972), p. 206.

2. Arthur A. Cohen, *The Communism of Mao Tse-tung* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 22-28.

3. "On Contradiction in the Light of Mao Tse-tung's Essay on Dialectical Materialism," *The China Quarterly* (CQ), No. 19 (July-September 1964), pp. 38-64.

4. Stuart R. Schram, "Mao Tse-tung as Marxist Dialectician," CQ, No. 29 (January-March 1967), pp. 155-65; see also *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969 revised edit.), pp. 84-88.

5. Karl A. Wittfogel, "Some Remarks on Mao's handling of Concepts and Problems of Dialectics," *Studies in Soviet Thought*, Vol. III, No. 4 (December 1963), pp. 251-69.

September 1937 turned his attention to more practical things.”⁶ Because Schram views these three essays as a “single intellectual enterprise,” he asserts that the “problem of dates and the problem of substance are closely linked.”⁷

The scholarly debate over the dating of these essays appeared to have reached something of an impasse by the early 1970s. However, the recent unearthing of pre-liberation versions of both *On Contradiction* and *On Practice* by Takeuchi Minoru (the editor of the fine scholarly series *Mao Zedong Ji*) has added significant fresh evidence which may permit of at least a partial resolution of the debate over dating. In both cases, the essays were appended to volumes by Mao entitled *Dialectical Materialism*. *On Contradiction* appears under the title *Maodun tongyi fazi* (*The Principle of the Unity of Contradictions*) as the concluding section (pp. 64–110) of Chapter III (“Materialist Dialectics”) of a volume published by *Dazhong shudian* in Dalian.⁸ Although this volume has no date of publication, it is obviously pre-liberation, and probably dates from the period 1946–48, Dalian having been under effective Communist control from 1946 onwards.⁹ The earliest known version of *On Practice* appears as Part 11 (pp. 35–49) of Chapter II (“Dialectical Materialism”) of a volume published by the *Zhongguo chubanshe* in March of 1946, but giving no place of publication.¹⁰ There is virtually no doubt that Mao’s authorship of both of these volumes is authentic.

The discovery of these pre-liberation texts adds significant new evidence not only to the debate over the dating of the two essays, but also to the related polemic over Mao’s ability and status as a Marxist theoretician during the Yan’an period. Although these recently unearthed documents *may* have been revised prior to their publication in the mid-1940s, and may still not exactly reproduce the content of Mao’s 1937 lectures, they are the earliest extant versions of them presently available. It can, moreover, be safely assumed that these pre-liberation texts are far closer to the original documents of 1937 in style and content than the official versions of 1950 and 1952, if not exactly reproducing them. For the first time, therefore, there exists the possibility of a textual

6. Schram, *Political Thought*, p. 87.

7. Schram, “Mao Tse-tung as Marxist Dialectician,” p. 157.

8. In the footnoting which follows, this volume is referred to as *BZF*, Vol. I.

9. Jacques Guillerma, *A History of the Chinese Communist Party 1921–1949* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1972), see the historical maps showing the extent of Communist influence, pp. 377, 385, 399, 402. Dalian had, in fact, been under Russian control following the Soviet occupation of Manchuria in the closing stages of the Second World War. The Russians refused to allow the Nationalist Government to land its troops at Dalian, and despite negotiations on this issue, Dalian remained under effective Russian control during the campaign for Manchuria. The Russian claims to Dalian were based on the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance of 14 August 1945. For further information on the status of Dalian, see *United States Relations with China with Special Reference to the Period 1944–1949*, Department of State Publication 3573, Far Eastern Series 30, pp. 125–26, 147, 233, 589–90.

10. Hereafter in footnoting, *BZF*, Vol. II. *On Practice* also appears in *BZF*, Vol. I, pp. 40–57, but *BZF*, Vol. II is utilized for reference purposes throughout this paper.

study of *On Contradiction* and *On Practice* comparing earlier and unofficial texts with the standardized and official post-liberation versions. It is the purpose of this article to present such a study, drawing on several methodological approaches designed to highlight similarities and differences between texts, and to demonstrate the possible contemporaneity of the original texts with other Yan'an writings: (1) linguistic analysis and comparison; (2) analysis of concepts; (3) analysis and dating of quotations. In addition, lengthy sections excised from the original texts on their republication are presented in translation in the appendix to the paper.

As one would expect, there are differences between the official and the original texts. In the case of *On Contradiction*, only about one-half of the original text has survived intact the process of editing, revision and standardization. Several sections have been completely or largely rewritten, while others have been excised. The official version also contains numerous additions written into the original text. The original text, in fact, reads very much as a first draft, badly in need of pruning and rewriting. Surprisingly, the same is not true of the 1946 version of *On Practice*. This text is remarkably similar to the official version, with only one major and several minor excisions. The possible reason for this similarity is that this 1946 version of *On Practice* almost certainly represents a republication. We know from Zhang Ruxin's article "Study and Master Mao Zedong's Theory and Tactics," which appeared in *Jiefang ribao* (*Liberation Daily*) on 18 and 19 February 1942, that *On Practice* had by then already been published by the Eighth Route Army as part of Mao's *Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism*. Unfortunately, no copy of this publication has ever come to light. However, the fact that a published version of *On Practice* did exist prior to 1946, suggests that Mao may have had cause to give his attention to revising and rewriting the text on the several occasions on which it came up for publication. If so, the 1946 version of this text may have been the result of several revisions, and thus needed less drastic reworking prior to the official publication in 1950. Because of this similarity between the 1946 and 1950 versions of *On Practice*, the following analysis tends to concentrate on the original text of *On Contradiction*, being as it is, significantly different from the official version.

Linguistic Analysis and Comparison

A writer's use of language is dynamic rather than static. C. P. Snow, in reviewing his own long literary career, commented that "the manner (or, if you like, the tone of voice, the rhythm, the predilection for individual words) in which anyone writes isn't likely to stay quite still."¹¹ Given the 15 years between 1937 and 1952, and Mao's prolific literary

11. C. P. Snow, Preface to *Strangers and Brothers* (London: Macmillan, 1972 Omnibus ed.), Vol. I, p. xvi.

output during this period, it is likely that the style of his language may have subtly altered. Jerome Ch'en has already provided a useful introduction to the problem of the linguistic analysis of Mao's writings.¹² He argues that Mao's literary style is characterized by certain singular features which can assist in the more ready identification of disputed texts. Mao's employment of the classical forms of conjunction is a case in point.¹³ In the pre-liberation texts of both *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*, Mao favours the conjunction *yu* (which Ch'en found to be a common feature of Mao's writings of the Yan'an period), while the official versions of both texts employ the conjunction *he* throughout.

In this section, however, "key words" and "key phrases" will be employed in making a comparison of original and official texts, and also in making a comparison between the original texts and other of Mao's writings of the Yan'an period, the latter in order to demonstrate the contemporaneity of the original texts.

Contradiction (Maodun). Wittfogel¹⁴ and Hsiung¹⁵ have already indicated Mao's propensity to use the word "contradiction" both before and during the Yan'an period. Neither, however, allude to a document originally entitled "The Tasks of the Chinese Anti-Japanese United Front in the Present Stage" written in May 1937 (that is, three months before *On Contradiction* was allegedly written).¹⁶ In this document Mao uses the word "contradiction" no less than 28 times, and utilizes the term in a manner that suggests that the concept of contradiction was becoming a major analytical category in the way he perceived both the domestic and external political situation. Several months earlier, in an interview with Agnes Smedley, Mao had referred to the contradiction which existed between the Sino-Japanese War and world peace.¹⁷ In addition to these examples, Mao refers to class

12. Jerome Ch'en, *Mao Papers: Anthology and Bibliography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. xiii-xxxi. It is, I believe, a pity that this fruitful methodological approach has not been more widely utilized and developed. Richard Baum's tart criticism of Ch'en's methodology as an "exercise in linguistic overkill," is firmly rejected here. Although of no interest to Baum, scholars involved in the analysis of Mao's work may benefit substantially from the application of such heuristic devices. For Baum's review, see *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 (1971), pp. 1200-202.

13. Ch'en, *Mao Papers*, p. xxii.

14. Wittfogel, "Some Remarks," pp. 257-63.

15. James Chieh Hsiung, *Ideology and Practice: The Evolution of Chinese Communism* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), pp. 68-69. Hsiung regards the entire debate concerning the dating of *On Contradiction* as "fruitless." However, for those engaged in the close analysis of Mao's works during the Yan'an period, the dating of *On Contradiction* can be of crucial significance.

16. *Mao Zedong lunwen ji* (Collection of Articles by Mao Zedong) (Shanghai: Dazhong chubanshe, 1937), pp. 18-37 (hereafter *Lunwen ji*); also in Takeuchi Minoru (ed.), *Mao Zedong ji* (Collected Writings of Mao Zedong), Vols. I to X (Tokyo: Hokubasha, 1970-72), Vol. V, pp. 189-205 (hereafter *Ji*); the official versions can be found in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Beijing: FLP, 1967), Vol. I, pp. 263-283 (hereafter *SW*); and in *Mao Zedong xuanji* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1966), Vol. I, pp. 232-48 (hereafter *XJ*).

17. "Guanyu Zhong-Ri wenti ji Xian shibian de tanhua" ("A talk on the problem of China and Japan, and the Xian incident"), in *Ji*, Vol. V, p. 182. It is worth noting in

contradictions and the impossibility of eliminating such contradictions while a class system remains¹⁸; "contradictoriness" within the process of change (c. 1937)¹⁹; contradictions within imperialist groups finding their resolution through war (1939)²⁰; the deepening contradiction between Japan and England, America, France and the Soviet Union (1938)²¹; the class contradictions existing between various of the Chinese classes (1940)²²; the contradiction between landlord and peasantry (1942)²³; and the huge contradiction which existed between rents and taxes and government expenditure (1942).²⁴ Finally, in 1942, Mao was to answer the question "what is a problem?" as follows:

A problem is the contradiction in a thing. Where one has an unresolved contradiction, there one has a problem. Since there is a problem, you have to be for one side and against the other, and you have to pose the problem. To pose the problem you must first make a preliminary investigation and study of the two basic aspects of the problem or contradiction before you can understand the nature of the contradiction. . . . It often happens that although a problem has been posed it cannot be solved because the internal relations of things have not yet been revealed. . . .²⁵

The parallel between this passage and sections of *On Contradiction* is evident.²⁶ With the discovery of this pre-liberation text of *On*

passing that Mao regarded this interview with Agnes Smedley as significant in that he utilized it as a medium to publicize the "new policy" which the CCP had recently decided upon. A copy of this interview was sent to Edgar Snow with a covering letter written by Mao requesting that he make known this new direction in policy. For a summary of Mao's letter of 10 March 1937, see Chün-tu Hsueh, *The Chinese Communist Movement 1921-1937* (Stanford: The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1960), p. 110.

18. "Lun kangri minzhu yu beifang qingnian" ("On Anti-Japanese democratic Northern Youth"), *Ji*, Vol. V, p. 225; also in *Lunwen ji*, p. 144.

19. "Bianzhengfa weiwu lun" ("On Dialectical Materialism"), *Ji*, Vol. VI, p. 278. Schram argues that this piece probably dates from late 1936 or early 1937. See Schram, *Political Thought*, p. 87.

20. "Guoji xin xingshi yu woguo kangzhan" ("The new international situation and China's War of Resistance"), *Ji*, Vol. VII, p. 17.

21. "Lun xin jieduan" ("On the New Stage"), *Ji*, Vol. VI, p. 238.

22. "Current problems of Tactics in the Anti-Japanese United Front," *SW*, Vol. II, pp. 423-24; also *XJ*, Vol. II, pp. 704-705.

23. "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu kangri genjiudi tudi zhengce de jue ding" ("Resolution of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party with regard to the land policy in the anti-Japanese base areas"), *Ji*, Vol. VIII, p. 49.

24. "Jingji wenti yu caizheng wenti" ("Economic and Financial Problems"), *Ji*, Vol. VIII, p. 189.

25. "Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing," *SW*, Vol. III, pp. 61-62; *XJ*, Vol. III, p. 796; *Ji*, Vol. VIII, p. 100.

26. *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 81; *SW*, Vol. I, pp. 323-24; *XJ*, Vol. I, p. 287. The following interesting passage has been excised from Mao's discussion of studying a problem: "In the countryside if two families or clans are engaged in a conflict, the mediator must recognize the reasons for the conflict on both sides, the bone of contention, the present situation, demands, and so on; only then will he be able to think out a method of resolving the dispute. There are such people in the countryside who are good at mediation, and they are constantly invited to mediate when a dispute arises; these people actually understand the dialectic of which we speak, the need to understand the particular characteristics of the various aspects of a contradiction," *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 81.

Contradiction it now appears evident that Mao's frequent use of the term "contradiction" was not merely random, but emanated from a theoretical position which perceived the analysis of contradictions within a phenomenon as the key to the comprehension of the nature and process of development of that phenomenon.

In terms of literary style, Mao does use an alternative to *maodun* in the original text. In section VI, "The Identity and Struggle of a Contradiction" (section V of the official text), he frequently utilizes the term *yuanjia* (enemy, antagonist, adversary) to indicate contradiction.²⁷ In the official text, this has been replaced throughout by *maodun*.

Principal (Zhuyao), Non-principal (Fei zhuyao), and Secondary (Ciyao) Contradictions. In both the original and official versions of *On Contradiction*, the most common method of discriminating between important and less important contradictions is the utilization of the qualifying terms "principal," "non-principal" and "secondary."²⁸ Contradictions are also categorized as "fundamental" (*genben*),²⁸ "basic" (*jiben*)²⁹ and "subordinate" (*fucong*).³⁰ In a section largely expurgated from the official text, Mao indicates the manner in which he was employing this distinction between contradictions:

In a semi-colonial country such as China, the relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions presents a complicated picture. Before a semi-colony suffered from imperialist oppression, its principal contradiction was the contradiction between the feudal or semi-feudal system and the broad masses of the people. All other contradictions are determined by this principal contradiction. However, when such a society suffers under imperialist oppression, the internal principal contradiction temporarily changes into a non-principal contradiction, and the contradiction between imperialism and the entire, or almost entire, semi-colonial society becomes the principal one, determining the development of all other contradictions. The status of the principal or non-principal contradiction changes at this time according to the extent of imperialist oppression and the extent of the people's revolution of the semi-colony.³¹

Further on, in another excised passage, Mao indicates that he perceived a distinction between the principal external contradiction and the principal internal contradiction, and that under certain historical conditions they may "almost merge":

At such a time, imperialism and the domestic feudal classes and even the bourgeoisie stand completely at one pole, while the masses of the people stand at the other. It is clearly evident at such a time that the principal external contradiction between imperialism and the semi-colony, and the principal

27. BZF, Vol. I, p. 95 *et seq.* The term *yuanjia* has a second meaning, and it is possible that Mao employs the term for the nuance which this second meaning provides. *Yuanjia* can refer to a love-hate relationship, to a lover to whom one always returns despite quarrels.

28. BZF, Vol. I, p. 82; SW, Vol. I, pp. 325-26; XJ, Vol. I, pp. 289-90.

29. BZF, Vol. I, p. 85; SW, Vol. I, p. 328; XJ, Vol. I, p. 293.

30. BZF, Vol. I, p. 87; SW, Vol. I, pp. 331-32; XJ, Vol. I, pp. 296-97.

31. BZF, Vol. I, p. 87; cf. SW, Vol. I, p. 331.

internal contradiction between the feudal forces and broad masses of people, almost merge to form a principal contradiction which determines the status of the other contradictions.³²

Other documents of the Yan'an period indicate that Mao was utilizing and applying these types of distinction between contradictions in formulating policy. In the 1937 document referred to above, Mao makes the following analysis:

As the principal contradiction between China and Japan has become the principal one and China's internal contradictions have dropped into a secondary and subordinate (*fucong*) place, changes have occurred in China's international relations and internal class relations, giving rise to a new stage of development in the current situation.³³

Further on, Mao notes that:

In terms of relative political importance the development of the national contradiction between China and Japan has demoted the domestic contradictions between classes and between political groupings to a secondary and subordinate place.³⁴

In the same document Mao also refers to "basic" (*jiben*) contradictions.³⁵ Mao was to favour the use of this term in May 1941 when he wrote an inner-Party directive which contained the following statement:

Of China's two major contradictions, the national contradiction between China and Japan is still primary (*jiben de*) and the internal class contradiction is still subordinate (*congshu*). The fact that a national enemy has penetrated deep into our country is all-decisive . . . the national contradiction is the primary one.³⁶

Disequilibrium, Imbalance, Unevenness (Bu pingheng). The concept of "disequilibrium" is closely associated with Mao's treatment of contradictions, and it appears several times in the original text of *On Contradiction*.³⁷ During the Yan'an period Mao's references to "disequilibrium" were usually set in the context of analyses of China's domestic political, economic and cultural situation.³⁸ By 1938, Mao perceived the unevenness of China's development as being advantageous in the war against Japan,³⁹ and by 1939 it was regarded as one of the key factors which would contribute to China's eventual victory over Japan.⁴⁰

32. BZF, Vol. I, pp. 88-89; cf. SW, Vol. I, p. 332.

33. Lunwen ji, p. 18; Ji, Vol. V, p. 189; SW, Vol. I, p. 263; XJ, Vol. I, p. 232.

34. Lunwen ji, p. 21; Ji, Vol. V, p. 191; SW, Vol. I, p. 265; XJ, Vol. I, p. 234.

35. Lunwen ji, pp. 18, 22; Ji, Vol. V, pp. 189, 192; SW, Vol. I, pp. 263, 265; XJ, Vol. I, pp. 232, 234.

36. "Conclusions on the Repulse of the Second Anti-Communist Onslaught," SW, Vol. II, pp. 463-64; XJ, Vol. II, pp. 739-40.

37. BZF, Vol. I, pp. 67, 90, 94, 103, 104; cf. SW, Vol. I, pp. 313, 333, 336.

38. SW, Vol. II, pp. 313, 287; XJ, Vol. II, pp. 594, 567; Ji, Vol. VII, pp. 72, 109. Also SW, Vol. III, p. 83; XJ, Vol. III, p. 819; Ji, Vol. VIII, p. 130.

39. "On Protracted War," SW, Vol. II, p. 118; XJ, Vol. II, p. 412; Ji, Vol. VI, p. 55.

40. "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," SW, Vol. II, p. 317; XJ, Vol. II, p. 598; Ji, Vol. VII, p. 114.

He also perceived the imbalance in political power among various parties and strata being due to historical reasons, this imbalance making itself manifest in different areas.⁴¹ By the time of the Seventh Party Congress in 1945, the concept of uneven development had become a "basic feature or basic law of the Chinese revolution."⁴² As with Mao's treatment of contradictions during the Yan'an period, it now appears evident that Mao's references to "disequilibrium" originated from a theoretical conviction that imbalance is a feature inherent in the development of all phenomena. As Mao points out in the original text of *On Contradiction*:

... in any contradiction, and at whatever time, the development of the contradictory aspects or profiles (*cemian*) is uneven (*bu pingheng*). Sometimes they seem to be in equilibrium, which is however only temporary and relative, while unevenness is basic. That is, when they seem to be in equilibrium, there is in fact no absolute equilibrium.⁴³

Unity of Opposites (Duili de tongyi). In the official version of *On Contradiction*, Mao asserts that the unity of opposites (*duili de tongyi*) is the basic law of materialist dialectics.⁴⁴ In the original text, Mao consistently employs the appellation *maodun tongyi* to describe this principle.⁴⁵ In a section excised from the official text, Mao asserted:

The law of the unity of opposites (*maodun tongyi*) is the fundamental principle of the universe, and the fundamental principle of ideological method (*sixiang fangfa*). Lenin called it the kernel of dialectics, and it stands opposed to the metaphysical view of development. It is opposed to the absolute law of identity of formal logic.⁴⁶

In his *Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism*, Mao (echoing the traditional Marxist view) lists the unity of opposites as one of the three most important categories of materialist dialectics, and here also employs the Chinese term *maodun tongyi*.⁴⁷ Again, in his notes (dated September 1937) on Ai Siqu's *Zhexue yu shenguo* (*Philosophy and Life*), Mao consistently utilizes the term *maodun tongyi* to refer to the unity of opposites.⁴⁸ However, he appears to have rarely utilized this term elsewhere during the Yan'an period.

41. "Lun xin jieduan" ("On the New Stage"), *Ji*, Vol. VII, p. 204.

42. "Resolution on some Questions in the History of our Party," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 1956), Vol. IV, p. 190.

43. *BZF*, Vol. I, pp. 88-89; cf. *SW*, Vol. I, p. 333.

44. *SW*, Vol. I, p. 311; *XJ*, Vol. I, p. 274.

45. *BZF*, Vol. I, pp. 64, 73, 94, 101, 106, 107, 109, 110.

46. *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 109.

47. *Ji*, Vol. VI, p. 300; also p. 302, where it appears in a quote from Engels.

48. See *Zhongguo zhexue* (*Chinese Philosophy*) (n.p.: San lian shudian, August 1979), Vol. I, pp. 26, 27, 28, 29. The recent publication of this document and its attendant commentaries by Chinese analysts represents an important contribution to the problem of the dating of *On Contradiction* and *On Practice*. For a fuller discussion of the importance of this publication, see note 122 below.

Analysis of Concepts

In addition to examining Mao's use of "key terms" in these and other documents, it is revealing to compare and contrast the original and official texts to indicate the differences and similarities in Mao's handling of theoretical and philosophical concepts over time. One of the most interesting features of the original text of *On Contradiction* is a lengthy analysis and refutation of formal logic, subsequently excised from the official version. In Part II of the text, entitled "The Law of Identity in Formal Logic and the Law of Contradiction in Dialectics," Mao discusses and rejects the three laws of formal logic; the laws of identity, contradiction and excluded middle (see Appendix, selection I, for a complete translation of this section). In his discussion of formal logic's law of contradiction, Mao details Kant's four conflicts of the transcendental ideas from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. He employs the Kantian antinomies to indicate that the necessary rejection of such contradictions by formal logic's law of contradiction is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of thought. Because thought is a reflection of things, and all things necessarily contain contradiction, then thought itself must mirror those contradictions. As Mao points out:

This is not an error in thought, but precisely where thought is correct, and the law of the unity of opposites (*maodun tongyi*) of dialectical logic is founded on this base.⁴⁹

However, Mao does not condone the Kantian form of contradiction, as he perceives it as a ritualistic adherence to "two principles which appear externally to be in a state of mutual conflict"; dialectics, on the other hand, "sees through to a thing's internal essence."⁵⁰ It is worth noting in passing that Mao appears to have muddled the fourth of these Kantian antinomies (which deals with the existence/non-existence of an absolutely necessary Being); such a confusion could have derived, however, from difficulties of translation into Chinese.

The excision of this entire section from the official version is rather puzzling. It appears to set forward briefly the type of logic which Mao perceived as in opposition to the dialectical logic which he was positing as the premise for his analysis of contradictions. As such, it does not appear to be wildly out of place. One possible explanation for its excision is that Mao subsequently perceived that the laws of logic he was attacking, because of their traditional status as basic and fundamental to all thought, warranted a far more sophisticated analysis and refutation than he was either willing or able to provide. There is also the possibility (as is the case with the earlier sections of his *Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism*) that Mao relied heavily on other sources in the writing of this section. If this is so, Mao's reluctance to include this section of the text in the official version is more understandable.⁵¹

49. BZF, Vol. I, p. 70.

50. BZF, Vol. I, p. 72.

51. For example, compare this section with Ai Siqi *et al.* (trans.), *Xin zhexue dagang* (*Outline of New Philosophy*) (Beijing: Dushu shenghuo chubanshe, 1936), pp. 78–80, 367–68, 413–18. Also compare pp. 236–37 with the selection II of the Appendix to this article.

Another long section is expurgated from what is Part V of the official text ("Identity and Struggle of the Aspects of a Contradiction"), and this section is of interest for in it Mao gives numerous examples of identity and struggle between contradictions. (See Appendix, selection V.) Some of these examples are rather dubious illustrations of the point he is trying to make. For instance, Mao twice utilizes the contradiction between life and death as an example of aspects of a contradiction transforming themselves into each other. In so doing, he tries to argue that live cells can arise from dead cells through "regeneration" (*tuotai*); "... life is inevitably transformed into death and death is inevitably transformed into life."⁵² From a biological point of view, such an argument would be difficult to sustain. Mao probably perceived that the credibility of his argument was weakened by such examples, which while being oxymoronic in the literary (and perhaps biological) sense, are not necessarily contradictory categories in the philosophical sense he was attempting to define. It is interesting to note, however, that Mao continued to believe in the mutual transformation of life and death, even though this section was excised from the original text on republication. In January 1957, at a conference of Party Committee Secretaries Mao asserted:

If life and death cannot be transformed into each other, then please tell me where living things come from. Originally there was only non-living matter on earth, and living things did not come into existence until later, when they were transformed from non-living matter, that is, dead matter. . . . While life is in progress, life and death are engaged in a constant struggle and are being transformed into each other all the time.⁵³

The appearance of this pre-liberation text of *On Contradiction* also adds to our knowledge of the theoretical views Mao held during the Yan'an period on social activity and development, and in particular, the relationship between society's base and superstructure. Cohen asserted in 1964 that Mao's views on this subject as expressed in the official version of *On Contradiction* were merely a thinly disguised copy of Stalin's ideas which had appeared in articles in 1938 and 1950.⁵⁴ Yet the section in

52. *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 105; see also p. 96.

53. *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* (Beijing: FLP, 1977), Vol. V, p. 368; also *Mao Zedong xuan ji* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1977), Vol. V, p. 348. Mao's limitations as a biologist are indicated here by his confusion of non-living and dead matter. The example of life and death as contradictory categories does remain in the official text of *On Contradiction*, but in muted form, and is not utilized as a major example as it is in the original; see *SW*, Vol. I, 338.

54. Cohen, *The Communism of Mao Tse-tung*, p. 23. In his 1950 essay *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics*, Stalin had asserted that the superstructure is an "exceedingly active force, actively assisting its base to take shape and consolidate itself, and doing its utmost to help the new system to finish off and eliminate the old base and the old classes" (Beijing: FLP, 1972), p. 5. However, the *locus classicus* for Stalin's views on this subject is *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* (September 1938), in which Stalin asserts *inter alia*: "Thus social ideas, theories and political institutions, having arisen on the basis of the urgent tasks of the development of the material life of society, the development of social being, themselves then react upon social being, creating the conditions necessary for

question is indeed in the original text, although a short passage has been excised from the official text. The original text reads:

Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there are no changes in their respective positions. It should be realized that under normal conditions, and viewed from a materialist point of view, they really are absolute and unchanging things; however, there are historically many particular situations in which they do change. The productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that sometimes such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role."⁵⁵

The rest of this passage almost exactly duplicates the official version. Mao could, therefore, not have borrowed these ideas from Stalin's 1950 text, and if we are now to concede that *On Contradiction* is of a 1937 vintage, it indicates that Mao may well have anticipated Stalin's views on this subject.

It is instructive also to examine the passages which have been added to the original text on republication. When this is done, the interesting fact emerges that a large number of the additions are polemical attacks on ideological "deviations" within the Chinese Communist Party. The most important of these is dogmatism, and the official text contains seven (sometimes lengthy) insertions criticizing comrades suffering from this malady.⁵⁶ The original text is, in fact, remarkably clear of attacks on dogmatism, and this throws into doubt the editorial introduction to the official version of *On Contradiction* which asserts that Mao originally wrote the essay with the purpose of "overcoming the serious error of dogmatist thinking to be found in the Party at the time."⁵⁷ If it was Mao's intention, it is implicit in the original text, rather than explicit as it is in the official version. Other ideological "deviations" attacked in the official version include adventurism,⁵⁸ opportunism⁵⁹ and empiricism.⁶⁰ None of these attacks appears in the original text. Although Mao does on one occasion refer to "numerous conceited and doctrinaire types within

completely carrying out the urgent tasks of the material life of society, and for rendering its further development possible" [*Problems of Leninism* (Beijing: FLP, 1976), p. 852; also in *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik): Short Course* (Moscow: FLPH, 1939), p. 117].

55. *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 93; cf. *SW*, Vol. I, pp. 335-36; *XJ*, Vol. I, p. 300. In this passage there is a literary variation between the official and the original texts. In the original text, Mao utilizes the term *zhudao* to indicate the principal aspect of a contradiction. This has been replaced by *zhuyao* in the official text.

56. *SW*, Vol. I, pp. 311, 316, 321, 322, 323, 324, 330.

57. *SW*, Vol. I, pp. 311-12.

58. *SW*, Vol. I, pp. 315, 327.

59. *SW*, Vol. I, p. 315.

60. *SW*, Vol. I, p. 324.

our ranks,"⁶¹ in terms of intra-Party feuding, the original text is largely unpolemical.

Other additions written into the original text appear to have the purpose of giving the document more theoretical substance. These include a thumb-nail sketch of Mao's epistemology (wedded to an attack on dogmatism),⁶² a definition of Leninism,⁶³ and two lengthy paragraphs dealing with Marx's critique of the contradictions in capitalism, and Stalin's analysis of Leninism and the Russian Revolution.⁶⁴ Nearly all references to Stalin in the official text are subsequent additions; Mao, in fact, only refers to Stalin by name on one occasion in the original text.⁶⁵

Although the original text of *On Contradiction* is largely unpolemical in terms of intra-Party feuding, Mao does vigorously attack the views of both Trotsky and Bukharin. In a section largely excised from the official text (only the quote from Lenin remains), Mao asserts that both are guilty of disregarding the distinction between antagonism and contradiction:

Bukharin regarded contradiction and antagonism as one and the same thing. He therefore considered that in a society in which socialism had been accomplished there were neither antagonisms nor contradictions. Lenin said: "This is extremely incorrect, antagonism and contradiction are not at all one and the same. Under socialism, the first will disappear, the second will remain." Bukharin is an advocate of the theory of equilibrium which refuses to recognize that the development of a thing is due to the movement of internal contradictions, and which considers that society will continue to develop even though there are no contradictions under socialism.

Trotsky sets out from a different extreme, but also regards contradiction and antagonism as one and the same thing. As a result, he considers that under socialism there not only exists a contradiction between workers and peasants, but that this will develop into an antagonism like the contradiction between labour and capital, which can only be resolved by employing revolutionary methods. The Soviet Union however has used the method of the socialization of agriculture to resolve it, and moreover has resolved it under the condition of socialism in one country, without having to wait for the international revolution alleged as necessary by the Trotskyites.

Bukharin has reduced contradiction to the point of elimination, while the Trotskyites have elevated contradiction into antagonism; neither of the two extremes of the right or left wing understand the problem of contradiction.⁶⁶

The Deborin school of philosophy also comes under attack in the original text.⁶⁷

61. *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 92.

62. *SW*, Vol. I, p. 321.

63. *SW*, Vol. I, p. 325. This definition is actually Stalin's, but it is not given as a quote, nor is its source identified in the official text. See *Problems of Leninism*, pp. 3, 160.

64. *SW*, Vol. I, pp. 329-30.

65. *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 89; "Lenin and Stalin in their study of the economics of the transitional period in the Soviet Union have taught us this method (grasping the principal contradiction)."

66. *BZF*, Vol. I, pp. 108-109.

67. *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 76.

Although (as was stated in the introduction to this paper) the 1946 version of *On Practice* is very similar to the official 1950 version, certain differences in the texts do warrant attention. For instance, in his analysis of the employment of rational knowledge to change the world, Mao commented that "each of man's actions (practice) is guided by his thought (*sixiang*), so naturally without thought there can be no action whatsoever."⁶⁸ This has been deleted from the official text. In another passage subsequently deleted from the official version, Mao provides an interesting analysis of social conditions which he considered could limit man's cognition:

Many men are limited by class conditions (the reactionary exploiting class has had no capacity for knowledge of any truth, and which as a result has no capacity for transforming the universe; on the contrary they have become the enemy which obstructs knowledge of the truth and the transformation of the world). Some men are limited by the division of labour (the division between mental and manual labour, and the division between the various industries), while some are limited by originally erroneous ideologies (idealism and mechanicalism, and so on; many are exploiting elements, but there are also exploited elements and this is due to the education of the exploiting elements). However, a general reason is the limitation which results from the historical condition of technological and scientific levels. The proletariat and its political party should utilize their own naturally superior class conditions (which no other class has), utilize the new technology and science, and utilize Marxism's world view and methodology closely relying on a basis of revolutionary practice, so that their knowledge changes as does the objective situation change, the logical keeps abreast of the historical, and they attain the goal of completely transforming the world.⁶⁹

Analysis and Dating of Quotations

The intellectual development of a writer can be reflected in his use of quotations. It obviously was of importance for Mao to be able to demonstrate his familiarity with Marxist-Leninist classics, and the use of direct quotation was one method of doing so. In the official version of *On Contradiction*, the break-down of direct quotation is as follows: Marx, once; Engels, twice; Lenin, 12 times; and Chinese works, four times. It is rather surprising that there is only one reference from Marx, and the source of this quote is most interesting. It comes, in fact, from the "Introduction" to the *Grundrisse*.⁷⁰ Although the *Grundrisse* was not available in German until 1939 (and then only in a limited edition),⁷¹ the "Introduction" had been available in both German (1903) and

68. BZF, Vol. II, p. 44; cf. SW, Vol. I, p. 304.

69. BZF, Vol. II, pp. 46-47; cf. SW, Vol. I, pp. 306-307.

70. See SW, Vol. I, p. 341; XJ, Vol. I, p. 305. For the quote in context, see Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* (Rough Draft) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), pp. 110-111.

71. See Martin Nicolaus' Foreword to *ibid.* p. 7.

Russian (1922) previously.⁷² We know from Red Guard publications that Mao thought highly enough of this "Introduction" to recommend it (in 1960?) to high-ranking cadres for study.⁷³ Yet if we look for other references to this source in Mao's writings of the Yan'an period, we look in vain. Given the fact that this "Introduction" spells out Marx's methodology in some detail, one might expect to find some reference to it during the Rectification Movement of 1942-44 when the emphasis was on employing Marxism as a methodology rather than dogma. But this is not the case.⁷⁴ This would suggest that Mao was unfamiliar with this work at the time. When we turn our attention to the original text of *On Contradiction*, we find that this quote is indeed absent. Moreover, the discussion of transformations of opposites in mythology to which it is appended in the official version is quite different in the original text which reads as follows:

Why is it that the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the Chinese Revolutions of 1911 and 1927 were not linked with revolutionary victory, but to failure? Why is it that in his entire life, the greater part of Napoleon's wars were linked to victory, while at the one battle of Waterloo, he was roundly defeated, his army beaten and himself taken prisoner? Why is it possible to build a railroad to Xinjiang and not to the moon? Why have the cordial relations between Germany and the Soviet Union turned into enmity,⁷⁵ while the enmity between France and the Soviet Union turned temporarily into cordial relations? In all of these questions, the sole reason is the concrete conditions of the time. When certain necessary conditions are present, contradictions arise in processes and, moreover, the opposites contained in them are interdependent and become transformed into one another; otherwise none of this would be possible. It is for this reason that none of the following can become an identity of opposites, or a concrete contradiction, and merely add to the material for annoyance and amusement amongst men: Don Quixote's mighty battle with the windmill, Sun Wukong's somersault of one hundred and eight thousand *li* over the clouds,

72. See *Makesi Engesi quanji* (Collected Works of Marx and Engels) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1962), Vol. XII, p. 841. For the text of the "Introduction," see this volume, pp. 733-62.

73. Joint Publications Research Service, *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought* (1949-68) (Arlington, Virginia: February 1974) Pt. 1, p. 234. Here, as in the official text of *On Contradiction*, it is cited as the "Introduction" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. The Chinese have recently published this "Introduction" together with the famous "Preface" of 1859 as a pamphlet in English. See Karl Marx, *Preface and Introduction to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Beijing: FLP, 1976).

74. See also Boyd Compton, *Mao's China: Party Reform Documents, 1942-44* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1952, 1966), pp. 6-7. The pages of *Jiefang ribao* (Liberation Daily) were also strangely silent between February and April 1942 in recommending Marxist texts for study. This is probably related to the attempt at this stage to elevate Mao's thought at the expense of "foreign dogma." However, for a list of Mao's works recommended for study, see Zhang Ruxin's article of 18 and 19 February 1942.

75. Mao is referring here to the change in Soviet-German relations from the cordiality of the Rapallo alliance of the 1920s to the hostility of the 1930s. Another historical "clue" can be found *BZF*; Vol. I, p. 88, where Mao refers to the "present war in Spain," to which is appended an editorial note which states "the Spanish Civil War lasted from 1936-1939."

Alice's journey through Wonderland, Robinson's wanderings on his lone island, Ah Q's spiritual victory, Hitler's world domination, Hegel's absolute spirit, Bukharin's theory of equilibrium, Trotsky's permanent revolution, the ideological unity of the emperor's scholars, Chen Duxiu's opportunism, the pro-Japanese faction's theory that weapons decide everything, and including from among Ancient China's legends, "the man of Qi's concern that the sky might fall," "Gua Fu's race with the moon"⁷⁶ and so on.⁷⁷

The two quotes from Engels in the official text are both from the section on "Dialectics, Quantity and Quality" in *Anti-Dühring*.⁷⁸ We know that *Anti-Dühring* had been translated into Chinese as early as 1930 and that it had been reissued in 1932 (Beijing), 1936 (Shanghai), and in 1940 (Yan'an).⁷⁹ Mao was to refer to it in a rather dismissive vein in his 1941 essay "Reform Our Study" as an example of the type of work that young dogmatists "are taught to nibble on."⁸⁰ In the original text of *On Contradiction*, only the first and shorter quote from Engels is present. However, this quote, which states simply that "motion itself is a contradiction," appears twice in the original text⁸¹ (see Appendix, selection II for the manner in which Mao employs the quote on the second occasion).

Of the 12 quotes from Lenin which appear in the official version of *On Contradiction*, 10 appear in the original text in one form or other.⁸² By far the most important source of these quotes is the various sections of Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* ("On the Question of Dialectics," "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic*," and "Conspectus of Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*"). These *Notebooks* had first been published in Russian in 1929–30 in *Lenin Miscellanies* IX and XII, but from 1933 they were published as a separate book under the title

76. Although this legend is titled correctly in the official text, Mao appears to have made an error in describing it in the original text. It is in fact called "Gua Fu's race with the sun." The entry in the *Ci hai* gives the following information about this legend: "Gua Fu was a mythical person. He pursued the sun with determination until he reached the sun's entrance, where dying of thirst, he swallowed the water from the Huang and Wei Rivers. This being insufficient, however, he finally expired from thirst. His staff was transformed into the 'forest of Deng,' to afford men of a later time shelter from the heat. See 'Shan hai jing—hai wei bei jing' and 'Shan hai jing—da huang bei jing.'"

77. BZF, Vol. I, pp. 102–103; cf. SW, Vol. I, p. 341.

78. See SW, Vol. I, pp. 316–17; XJ, Vol. I, pp. 280–81. Note the discrepancy in the English translation; an extra part of a sentence has been added. For the quotes in context, see Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (Beijing: FLP, 1976), pp. 152–53.

79. *Zhongguo chuban shiliao, pubian* (*Materials on the History of Publishing in China*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shujiu chuban, 1957), p. 445. See also Wu Liping, "Mao zhuxi guanxin 'Fan Dulin lun' de fanyi" (*Chairman Mao's Interest in the Translation of 'Anti-Dühring'*), in *Zhongguo zhexue*, Vol. I, p. 44. In this article, Wu Liping, who translated the 1940 edition of *Anti-Dühring*, states that Mao had taken a close personal interest in its translation; also that Mao had referred frequently to an earlier translation of *Anti-Dühring* during the writing of *On Contradiction* and *On Practice*.

80. See Compton, *Mao's China*, p. 63.

81. BZF, Vol. I, pp. 73, 74.

82. BZF, Vol. I, pp. 64, 73, 75, 77, 82, 93, 94–95, 103, 106, 108; cf. SW, Vol. I, pp. 311, 316, 317, 319, 324, 336, 337, 341–42, 343, 345.

of *Philosophical Notebooks*.⁸³ In 1936, the first section of this work was translated into Chinese under the title *Hegeer lunlixue dagang* (*A General Outline of Hegel's Logic*)⁸⁴ and Mao actually quotes from this section once in *On Contradiction*.⁸⁵ There is no bibliographical evidence to suggest that the remainder of the *Philosophical Notebooks* had been translated into Chinese *in toto* by the time that *On Contradiction* was supposedly written in 1937. In fact, the *Philosophical Notebooks* were not translated into Chinese as a complete volume until after 1949.⁸⁶ However, the *Xin zhexue dagang* (*Outline of New Philosophy*), which had been available since 1936, contains at least four of the quotes from the *Philosophical Notebooks* which Mao utilizes.⁸⁷ Also, if we refer to a compendium on ideological method entitled *Ma En Lie Si sixiang fangfa lun* (on the ideological method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin) which was in circulation during the Rectification Movement of 1942–44, we find that at least five of the quotes from the *Philosophical Notebooks* are also available in that source.⁸⁸ It would thus appear that Mao had access at least to extracts from the *Philosophical Notebooks* during the Yan'an period, if not to the entire volume.

The other quotes which come from Lenin in the original text derive from three different sources. First, and as we have already seen, Mao employs Lenin's distinction between antagonism and contradiction in his attack on Bukharin, although in the original text Mao utilizes the entire quote.⁸⁹ Lenin's "Remarks on N. I. Bukharin's *Economics of the Transitional Period*" were included in Lenin's *Selected Works* (Russian) Vol. XI, but this volume was not translated into Chinese until 1942 (first section) and 1945 (second section).⁹⁰ Wittfogel has suggested that Mao derived this quote from the Chinese translation of the Russian article entitled "Dialectical Materialism," in which it appears. This article had appeared firstly in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (prepared by Mitin and others) in 1935, and had been translated into Chinese by Ai Siqi and Zheng Yili under the title *Xin zhexue dagang* (*Outline of New Philosophy*), and published in June 1936.⁹¹ Mao's close association with

83. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1961), Vol. XXXVIII (Philosophical Notebooks), p. 13.

84. *Zhongguo chuban shiliao*, p. 459.

85. *SW*, Vol. I, p. 337; *XJ*, Vol. I, p. 302. For the source of this quote see Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 109; also *Liening quanji* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1959), Vol. XXXVIII, p. 111; see also *BZF*, Vol. I, pp. 94–95.

86. *Zhongguo chuban shiliao*, *pubian*, pp. 452–466, *passim*.

87. Ai Siqi *et al.*, *Xin zhexue dagang*, pp. 235, 240, 243, 403; *cf.* *BZF*, Vol. I, pp. 64, 77, 94–95, 103; also *SW*, Vol. I, pp. 311, 337, 341–42, 319.

88. This interesting volume, which is available in the Hoover Library, was published by *Jiefang she*, and bears the publication date January 1950. However, it has a first preface dated 22 April 1942 and this preface makes clear that it was published for the use of cadres during the Rectification Movement. For the quotes in question, see pp. 186, 187, 191, 203.

89. *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 108; *cf.* *SW*, Vol. I, p. 345.

90. *Zhongguo chuban shiliao*, p. 462–63.

91. Wittfogel, *Some Remarks*, p. 263, See Ai Siqi *et al.*, *Xin zhexue dagang*, p. 241.

Ai Siqi during the Yan'an period suggests a strong possibility that he was familiar with this work.

Secondly, in the original text of *On Contradiction* Mao utilizes Lenin's dictum "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement," which comes from *What is to be Done?*⁹² This quote also appears in both the 1946 and 1950 versions of *On Practice*,⁹³ and in *On New Democracy* (1940).⁹⁴

Thirdly, in the official text of *On Contradiction*, Mao employs a quote from Lenin's "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation, and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin."⁹⁵ In the original text, Mao does not use a direct quote, but asserts in words which paraphrase this quote; "On several occasions Lenin spoke of the need to observe a problem from all sides, resolutely opposing one-sidedness."⁹⁶ Mao also employs the source of this quote in *On New Democracy* (1940), where he utilizes (somewhat out of context) Lenin's distinction between politics and economics.⁹⁷

Of the two quotes from Lenin not in the original text which appear in the official text, one is from Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*.⁹⁸ This quote does, however, appear in the ideological compendium of 1942 referred to above.⁹⁹ The remaining quote is from Lenin's comments on the Hungarian Communist Bela Kun entitled "Communism," in which Lenin asserts he "gives up the most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, the concrete analysis of concrete conditions."¹⁰⁰ This quote also appears in the official version of *Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War* (December 1936), but if we check the original text, we find that here too this quote is absent.¹⁰¹ It also appears in an article of April 1944 entitled *Our Study and the Current Situation*.¹⁰² Unfortunately the original version of this document is not available for comparison. The weight of the evidence would suggest, however, that Mao was not familiar with this source during the Yan'an period.

The five quotes from Lenin and Stalin in the 1946 text of *On Practice* are all included in the 1950 text. The only discrepancy which exists is in the manner in which the quotes are rendered in Chinese; four of the five quotes are translated rather differently in the 1950 text, indicating that they had probably been checked against a standard source prior to the official publication.¹⁰³

92. BZF, Vol. I, p. 93; cf. SW, Vol. I, p. 336.

93. BZF, Vol. II, p. 44; cf. SW, Vol. I, p. 304.

94. SW, Vol. II, p. 382; Ji, Vol. VII, p. 203.

95. SW, Vol. I, p. 324.

96. BZF, Vol. I, p. 82.

97. SW, Vol. II, p. 340; Ji, Vol. VII, p. 149.

98. SW, Vol. I, p. 312; cf. BZF, Vol. I, p. 65. 99. Ma En Lie Si sixiang, pp. 186-87.

100. SW, Vol. I, p. 323, also p. 328; cf. BZF, Vol. I, p. 80.

101. Cf. SW, Vol. I, pp. 195-96; Ji, Vol. V, pp. 103, 167.

102. SW, Vol. III, p. 165.

103. BZF, Vol. II, pp. 36, 38, 44, 45; cf. SW, Vol. I, pp. 297, 299, 304, 305.

One of the interesting features of the original text of *On Contradiction* is that it contains several passages heavily larded with quotes from Chinese sources, these being deleted from the official text. For example, in bringing to a close his discussion of "The Two Views of Development" (section I), Mao writes:

In order to drive out the Japanese robbers, we must rely principally on the national united front to carry out a determined revolutionary war. "Only after something has first become rotten will worms breed in it; and only after a man first doubts will malicious talk make its entry." This is a saying by Su Dongpo.¹⁰⁴ "When internal examination discovers nothing wrong, what is there to be anxious about, what is there to fear?" This is a Confucian truth.¹⁰⁵ If a person strengthens himself in his youth, he doesn't easily catch cold; the Soviet Union to this day had not suffered attack by Japan, and this is due completely to its strength. "When Lei Gong beat the bean curd, he chose a weak object to bully."¹⁰⁶ Things under heaven depend solely on one's strength, so it is no use blaming heaven or other people; man is the master of his own fate, difficulties can be overcome, and external conditions can be changed; this is our philosophy.¹⁰⁷

Mao also invokes Su Dongpo to illustrate his argument concerning the particularity and universality of contradiction:

It is because each contradiction is particular that not one thing in the whole universe is the same, that change is limitless, and that its existence is temporary, and therefore relative. Su Dongpo stated "If things are observed as they change, then heaven and earth can't even remain for a moment." In modern terms, it could be said that what he was speaking of was the particularity of contradiction, its relativity. "If things are observed unchanging, all the things and myself will last forever."¹⁰⁸ This speaks of the universality of contradiction, its absoluteness. This truth concerning general and individual character, concerning absoluteness and relativity, is the quintessence of the theory of contradiction. If this is understood, then anything can be mastered (*yi tong bai tong*); what the ancients called "to be familiar with the *Dao*" (*wen Dao*), viewed from today's perspective is to be familiar with the *Dao* of contradiction.¹⁰⁹

Mao also takes recourse to classical quotation in a section designed to

104. Su Dongpo (A.D. 1036–1101); Chinese poet, essayist, painter and calligrapher. This quote comes from Su Dongpo's *Fan Zeng lun* (On Fan Zeng).

105. *Analects*; Book XII, Chap. IV. I have used Legge's translation; see *The Four Books* (Hong Kong; Wei Tung Book Store, 1973), p. 95.

106. Mao also uses this quote in *On Protracted War* (1938); see *Ji*, Vol. VI, p. 138. Here, as in *On Contradiction*, this sentence has been deleted from the *Selected Works*.

107. *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 68; excised from *SW*, Vol. I, p. 315.

108. This quotation from Su Dongpo is taken from the first of two prose poems entitled *Chi bi fu* (*Poems on the Red Cliff*). For the context in which Su Dongpo wrote these beautiful poems and an alternate translation of the quotation, see Lin Yutang, *The Gay Genius: The Life and Times of Su Tungpo* (Melbourne, London and Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1948), pp. 197–204, esp. p. 202; For two alternate translations, see C. D. Le Gros Clark, *Selections from the Works of Su Tung-p'o* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931), pp. 48–51; and Burton Watson, *Su Tung-p'o: Selections from a Sung Dynasty Poet* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 89.

109. *BZF*, Vol. I, p. 86; cf. *SW*, Vol. I, p. 330.

illustrate the identity and struggle of contradictions. In this section, Mao merely strings together a number of quotes which he feels reinforce his views. (For the rest of this section, see Appendix, selection IV):

“ Good medicine is bitter to the taste but beneficial for the sickness.” “ Sincere advice is not pleasant to hear but it is beneficial for one’s conduct.”¹¹⁰ “ It is on disaster that good fortune perches, it is beneath good fortune that disaster crouches.”¹¹¹ “ To love yet know their bad qualities, to hate and yet know their excellences.”¹¹² “ To glance ahead but not behind is called being a boorish oaf; to know one but not two is he who is not yet a wise man.”¹¹³

In the official text, there are only four quotes from classical Chinese sources. The first of these, Dong Zhongshu’s saying “ Heaven changeth not, likewise the *Dao* changeth not,” does not appear in the original text.¹¹⁴ Mao does, however, utilize this quote in his *Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism*.¹¹⁵ Likewise, the quote from Ban Gu, “ Things that oppose each other also complement each other,” is not in the original text.¹¹⁶ However, Mao’s quote from Sun Zi does appear in the original text.¹¹⁷ Mao also employs a quote from Zhang Yu’s commentary on *The Art of War* in the original text.¹¹⁸ This quote, “ cause an uproar in the east and strike in the west,” also appears in Mao’s *Basic Tactics* of 1938.¹¹⁹ Sun Zi was one of the Chinese sources most frequently cited by Mao in his military writings of the Yan’an period, and the quote which appears in the official text of *On Contradiction* appears at least twice in these writings.¹²⁰ The quote from Wei Zheng in the official version does appear in the original text, but in the latter case, Mao refers to him by his posthumous title Tang Taizong.¹²¹

110. Although Mao has separated these two sentences with quotation marks, they are part of the same quotation from the *Kongzi jiaoyu*, Book VI.

111. This quotation is from Lao Zi, Chap. 58. I have followed Lau’s translation; see Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. D. C. Lau (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 119.

112. This quote comes from the *Da xue* (*The Great Learning*), commentary of the philosopher Zeng, Chap. VIII. I have adapted Legge’s translation. Mao uses the quote out of context and the full passage runs: “ What is meant by ‘ The regulation of one’s family depends on the cultivation of his person,’ is this: Men are partial where they feel affection and love; partial where they despise and dislike, partial where they stand in awe and reverence; partial where they feel sorrow and compassion; partial where they are arrogant and rude. Thus it is that there are few men in the world who love (*hao*; Mao uses *ai*) and at the same time know the bad qualities of the object of their love, or who hate and yet know the excellences of the object of their hatred.” (Legge, *The Four Books*, pp. 10–11.)

113. BZF, Vol. I, p. 101; excised from SW, Vol. I, pp. 339–40.

114. Cf. SW, Vol. I, p. 313; BZF, Vol. I, p. 66.

115. Ji, Vol. VI, p. 285.

116. Cf. SW, Vol. I, p. 343; BZF, Vol. I, p. 106.

117. Cf. SW, Vol. I, p. 323; BZF, Vol. I, p. 81.

118. See Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 80. Also BZF, Vol. I, p. 100.

119. Mao Tse-tung, *Basic Tactics*, trans. Stuart R. Schram (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 84.

120. SW, Vol. I, p. 190; XJ, Vol. I, p. 166; Ji, Vol. V, p. 97; also SW, Vol. II, p. 164; XJ, Vol. II, p. 458; Ji, Vol. VI, p. 113.

121. Cf. SW, Vol. I, p. 324; BZF, Vol. I, p. 81.

Conclusion

The three methodological approaches employed in this paper have had the purpose of demonstrating within various dimensions the similarities and differences between the texts. They have also been utilized to establish the contemporaneity of the original texts to other writings of the Yan'an period. Although in the case of *On Contradiction* there are substantial differences between the original and official texts, the weight of the evidence presented above suggests, first that Mao's authorship of the documents is beyond question; and secondly, that in terms of linguistic usage, conceptual analysis, and employment of reinforcing quotations, it is quite feasible that the texts are contemporaneous with other undisputed texts of the Yan'an period. In terms of the debate over dating, it now appears probable that these essays were in fact originally conceived and written in 1937, as the Chinese and Mao himself¹²² have consistently claimed. It also appears likely that Schram is correct in believing the three essays on dialectics to be a single intellectual enterprise from the early Yan'an period. At the very least, it puts out of court the arguments of Cohen, and Doolin and Golas that the essays could not have been written prior to liberation.

The discovery of these texts marks a significant step forward in filling the gaps in our understanding of the development of Mao's thought, both during the Yan'an period and generally. In methodological terms, the exclusion of *On Contradiction* and *On Practice* from Mao's Yan'an writings no longer appears justifiable. It is to be hoped that a full Chinese text of these essays will be published by Japanese scholars in the near future, thus allowing a wider access to these, at present, rare documents.

122. See Mao's 1965 interview with Edgar Snow in *The Long Revolution*, p. 206. Not only have the Chinese consistently maintained that *On Contradiction* and *On Practice* were originally written by Mao in 1937, they have also recently begun to discuss the variations between the official and original versions of these documents. Guo Huaruo, in his article "Mao zhuxi kangzhan chuqi guanghui de zhexue huodong" ("The glorious philosophical activities of Chairman Mao during the early stage of the War of Resistance"), asserts that the original text of *On Practice* is very similar to that published in the *Selected Works*: "When *On Contradiction* is compared to the record of the original lecture," he continues, "there are comparatively major revisions, the most important deletion being Chapter Two 'The Law of Identity of Formal Logic and the Law of Contradiction of Dialectics,' which included an explanation and criticism of the 'law of identity,' 'the law of contradiction' and the 'law of excluded middle'" (*Zhongguo zhexue*, Vol. I, pp. 35-36) Wu goes on to list some of the sections which have been revised and added to on republication. It would appear probable from the description given by Wu that he is referring to the same document which I have been analysing in some depth in the course of this paper. Wu's article is also significant in that he refers to the contents of Mao's *Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism* (although he does not refer to them by name); Mao had previously thrown doubt on his authorship of this document in his 1965 interview with Edgar Snow. The publication of Wu's article and the previously unknown notes by Mao on Ai Siqu's *Philosophy and Life* (in *Zhongguo zhexue*, Vol. I, pp. 5-30) may presage a greater willingness on the part of the Chinese to reveal the existence and texts of documents previously kept secret during Mao's own lifetime. Such a change in policy would certainly be greatly welcomed by all scholars working in this field.

Appendix

In the translations that follow, page numbers in brackets refer to the original text of *On Contradiction*. At the end of each translated passage, reference is given to the page numbers in the English edition of Mao's *Selected Works* (Beijing: FLP, 1967), Vol. I, from which the passage has been taken.

(1) (p. 69)

II. *The Law of Identity in Formal Logic
and the Law of Contradiction in Dialectics*

We have discussed above the metaphysical and dialectical views of development. The struggle between these two ways of looking at the world constitutes the struggle in methods of thought between formal logic and dialectical logic.

Bourgeois formal logic has three fundamental laws: the first is called the law of identity, the second the law of contradiction, and the third the law of excluded middle. What is the law of identity? The law of identity states: In the process of thought, a concept remains unchanged throughout, being forever equal to itself. For example, a chemical element is forever equal to that chemical element; China is forever equal to China, and a certain person is forever equal to that certain person. Its formula is A equals A; this law is metaphysical. Engels says that it is the fundamental law of the old view of the universe. Its mistake lies in not recognizing contradiction and change within a thing, and because of this, removing temporariness and relativity from a concept, attributing it with permanence and absoluteness. It doesn't understand that a thing and the concept that reflects a thing are both relative and changeable; a certain chemical element is certainly not forever equal to that certain element, and all forms of chemical element are changing. China also will not forever be equivalent to China, for China is changing; the age-old feudal China of the past and the free and liberated China of the future are two things. A certain person is also not forever equal to that certain person; a person's physique and thought change. Concepts in thought are reflections of objective things, and objective things are changing; the content of a concept is also changing. In fact, there is no such thing as a concept which is forever equivalent to itself.

What is the law of contradiction? The law of contradiction states: A concept itself cannot at the same time contain two or more mutually contradictory meanings, and if a certain concept contains two contradictory meanings, then that is regarded as a logical error. A contradictory concept cannot simultaneously have both sides correct or both sides incorrect, and the correct one is, and can only be, one of those two. Its formula is A is not equal to not-A. Kant has enumerated the four following antinomies (*maodun sixiang*) (p. 70). The world's time has a beginning and an end, and is limited in space; the world has no beginning or end in time, and also is limitless in space. This is the first of them. In the world everything is constituted of simple matter (cannot be re-divided); in the world there are no simple things, everything is complex (can be re-divided). This is the second of them. In the world there exists free causation; in the world there is no freedom, everything is inevitable. This is the third of them. In the world there exists a certain inevitable essence (*biran de shizhi*); in the world nothing is inevitable, everything is accidental. This is the fourth of them. Kant gave these irreconcilable and mutually opposed principles the one title of "The Second Law of Contradiction." However, he stated that these

were only contradictions in man's thought, in the real world they really did not exist. According to the law of contradiction in formal logic, these contradictions were thus a mistake, and had to be rejected. However, in reality, thought is a reflection of things. There is not one thing which does not contain contradiction, and because of this, there is no concept which does not contain contradiction. This is not an error in thought, but precisely where thought is correct, and the law of the unity of contradictions of dialectical logic is founded on this base. It is only with formal logic's rejection of the contradictory law of contradiction that it becomes really incorrect thought. The law of contradiction in formal logic is only a manifestation of the negative of the law of identity, and it functions as a supplement to the law of identity, the purpose of which is to consolidate the law of identity's so-called "a concept is equal to itself," A is equal to A.

What is the law of excluded middle? The law of excluded middle states: Of the two opposite meanings of a concept, the correct one must be one or the other, for it is not possible for both to be incorrect, or to rush to a third as the correct meaning. Its formula is "A is equal to B, or not equal to B, but cannot be equal to C." They do not realize that things and concepts are developing, and in the process of development of things and concepts, not only are their internal contradictory elements made manifest, but the movement of these contradictory elements can be observed, negation and resolution. The thing or concept changes to become a third factor (p. 71) which is not-A and not-B, changes to become a new thing or concept which is one step higher. Correct thought should not exclude the third factor, should not exclude the law of the negation of the negation. According to the law of excluded middle, in the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the correct one is not the former but the latter, and the classless society is not possible. However, it is a fine thing that the process of social evolution does not stop at class struggle, but progresses towards a proletarian society. As regards the contradiction between China and Japanese imperialism, as well as opposing the invasion of Japanese imperialism, we advocate that through national revolution and a revolution within Japan, the two nations will reach a stage of free association; we do not agree that a post-independence China must remain forever in a state of hostility with Japan. The same applies to the opposition between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy; a higher stage to both of them will be the epoch in which there will be no states and no governments, and this will be arrived at through proletarian democracy. The law of excluded middle in formal logic also supplements its law of identity, which only recognizes the fixed condition of a concept, and which opposes its development, opposes revolutionary leaps, and opposes the principle of the negation of the negation.

It can therefore be seen that all the laws of formal logic oppose contradictoriness and advocate the characteristic of identity, oppose development and change of concepts and things, and advocate their solidification and immobility, and this is in direct opposition to dialectics.

Why do formal logicians advocate these things? Because they observe things separate from their continual mutual function and interconnection; that is, they observe things at rest rather than in movement, and as separate rather than in connection. Therefore it is not possible for them to consider and acknowledge the importance of contradictoriness and the negation of the negation within things and concepts, and so they advocate the rigid and inflexible law of identity.

(p. 72) Dialectics on the other hand observes things in movement and in

connection, and is in direct opposition to the law of identity of formal logic, advocating rather the revolutionary law of contradiction.

Dialectics considers that the contradictions in thought are none other than the reflection of objective external contradictions. Dialectics does not ritualistically adhere to two principles which appear externally to be in a state of mutual conflict (for example, the many antinomies raised by Kant in his four contradictory principles and to which I referred above), but sees through to a thing's internal essence. The task of dialecticians is to perform the task that those formal logicians have not carried out – study of an object – to concentrate attention on finding out the strength of its contradictions, the tendency of the contradictions, the aspects of the contradictions, and the fixity of the contradictions' internal relations. The external world and man's thought are both in motion and are dialectical; they are not static and metaphysical. For this reason, the revolutionary law of contradiction (namely the principle of the unity of contradictions) therefore occupies the principal position in dialectics.

The entirety of formal logic has only one nucleus, and that is the reactionary law of identity. The entirety of dialectics also has only one nucleus, and that is the revolutionary law of contradiction.

Does dialectics oppose the identity of things or concepts? It does not. Dialectics recognizes the relative identity of things or concepts. Why then does dialectics oppose the law of identity of formal logic? It is because the law of identity of formal logic is an absolute law which rejects contradictions. Dialectics acknowledges the identity of things or concepts, but asserts that they simultaneously contain contradictions and are interconnected; this kind of identity indicates the interconnection of contradictions, it is relative and temporary. Since the law of identity of formal logic is an absolute law which rejects contradictions, it cannot but advance the law of excluded middle which opposes one concept changing into another concept, or one thing changing into another thing. (p. 73) Dialectics on the other hand regards the identity of a thing or concept as temporary, relative and conditional; because the struggle of contradictions guides the regularities (*guilüxing*) of change and development of a thing or a concept, such struggle is forever absolute and unconditional. Because formal logic does not reflect a thing in its true condition, dialectics cannot allow its existence. There is only one scientific truth, and that truth is dialectics. (*SW*, Vol. I, p. 315.)

(II) (p. 73) Why do we say that contradiction is motion? Haven't there been those who have disputed Engel's assertion? This is because the theory of contradiction discussed by Marx, Engels and Lenin has become the most important theoretical base of the proletarian revolution. This has led to all-out attacks by bourgeois theorists (p. 74) who constantly hope to overturn Engel's law that "motion is contradiction." Raising aloft their obstreperous refutations they have moreover produced the following reasons: the motion of things in the real world is in different instances of time, and through different points in space; when a thing is positioned at a certain point, it occupies that point, and when it moves to another point it occupies that other point. In this way, the motion of things in time and space is divided into many sections; there are no contradictions, for if there were contradictions there could be no movement.

Lenin has pointed out the absurdity of this reasoning, pointed out that this reasoning in fact, by observing continual motion as many sections in time and space and as many static conditions, results in denying motion. Without the

contradiction in so-called motion in which a thing occupies a point and at the same time does not occupy a point, and without this continuous and interrupted unity, the unity of motion and rest, inaction and action, motion would be fundamentally impossible. To deny contradiction is to deny motion. All motion in nature, society and thought is this motion of the unity of contradictions. (*SW*, Vol. I, p. 316.)

(III) (p. 90) For instance, for a long period the bourgeoisie has occupied the principal position in capitalist society, playing the leading role, while the proletariat remained subordinate to it. However, prior to and after the revolution, the proletariat changes into the principal position and plays the leading role, while the bourgeoisie changes in the opposite direction. The Soviet Union on the eve of the October Revolution was like this. . . . how do we explain Japan and pre-revolutionary Russia? In these cases, the feudal forces still enjoyed superiority, and capitalism was still not performing the function of deciding everything. This was due to their contradictory aspects not yet having completed their decisive change. Because of the era, this change could not travel the old historical road, but was change which came into being under other historical circumstances; that is, in which the landlord class and the bourgeoisie changed entirely to a position of being dominated, and in which the proletariat and the peasantry rose to occupy the leading position. At present, all countries which have still not yet completed a capitalist transformation (including China) will follow this new road, although (p. 91) they certainly cannot leap over the stage of the democratic revolution; however, this revolution will be led and carried out by the proletariat.

In the contradiction between imperialism and the entire Chinese society, the former occupies the principal aspect, and it enjoys superiority in the struggle between the two sides. But in this situation of mutual opposition, this state of affairs is in the process of changing; China on the one hand is changing from being oppressed to being free and independent; imperialism, however, will be overthrown.

In China, the antagonistic situation existing internally between the feudal forces and the broad masses of the people is also changing. The people will rely on revolutionary struggle to transform themselves into the leading and dominant force. There has already been illustration of this in the past; the Southern revolutionary forces changed from a secondary to the principal position, and the Northern warlords changed in the opposite direction; and there was a similar situation in the Soviet areas, in which the peasants changed from the ruled to the rulers, and the landlords changed in the opposite direction.

In the relationship in China between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, because the bourgeoisie has retained the means of production and sovereignty, to the present it still occupies the leading position. However, in terms of leadership of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution, the proletariat occupies the leading position because of its level of consciousness and revolutionary thoroughness as compared to the vacillation of the bourgeoisie. This point will influence the future of the revolution in China. Only if the proletariat allies itself with the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie will it be able to politically and materially occupy the leading position. If it can do this, the proletariat will assume the decisive leading function of the revolution.

With regard to the contradiction between the peasantry and the workers, the workers have changed from their former subordinate position to their present

leading position, and the peasantry have changed in the opposite direction. In the contradictions between the industrial workers and the handicraft workers, skilled and unskilled workers (p. 92), town and countryside, mental and manual labour, materialism and idealism, all have made the same sort of change. (*SW*, Vol. I, pp. 332–34.)

(IV) (p. 98) There are those who say that the Communist Party is internationalist, and is therefore incapable of being at the same time patriotic. However, we make a declaration that we are internationalists but at the same time, because we are a political party of a colony (the condition), we struggle for the protection of the motherland, and in opposition to imperialist oppression. Only when we have firstly escaped from imperialist oppression, can we participate in a world communist society; it is this that allows the two to constitute an identity. Under certain conditions, patriotism and imperialism are both in opposition and complementary. Why is it that the Communist Parties of imperialist countries resolutely oppose patriotism? It is because patriotism in that context has identity only with the interests of the bourgeoisie, and is fundamentally opposed to the interest of the proletariat.

There are those who say that the Communist Party cannot also believe in the Three People's Principles at the same time. However, we declare that, prior to the stage of the Communist movement, while remaining adherents to the Party's (p. 99) communist programme, we can do no other than resolutely lead the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal national democratic revolution (this is the condition). Therefore, not only do we not oppose them, we previously implemented the true programme of the Three People's Principles (anti-imperialist nationalism, the principle of people's rights of soviets of workers and peasants, and the democratic principle of agrarian revolution): Moreover, in the past decade, the tradition of the true Three People's Principles has remained only with the Communist Party. Besides a few elements like Song Qingling, He Xiangning, Li Yangjiu, etc., the Guomindang has discarded this tradition. The political programme of the Communist Party for the democratic revolution is not in conflict with the true Three People's Principles, the thoroughgoing and progressive Three People's Principles. When we have passed through the democratic stage, we will change to communism. The Three People's Principles and communism are not a single entity, and the two are in contradiction; the present stage and the future stage are not a single entity, and the two are in contradiction. However, they are both in opposition and complementary; a certain condition can create identity. . . .

The Chinese proletariat and bourgeoisie have agreed upon an anti-Japanese united front; this is one aspect of the contradiction. The proletariat must raise its political consciousness and pay close attention to the bourgeoisie's political vacillations, and its corrupting and destructive effect on the Communist Party, in order to guarantee the independence of Party and class; this is the other aspect of the contradiction. A united front of the various political parties with independence for those parties (p. 100), are the two aspects of the contradiction constituting the present political movement. There would be no united front if one of these two aspects, the party's right to determine its own policies, was removed. We give the people freedom; this is one aspect. We also suppress the Chinese traitors and wreckers; this is the other aspect. Because of certain conditions, these two, freedom and unfreedom, are connected, and it won't do to be without either of them; this is the unity or identity of opposites. The

organizational form of the Communist Party and the Soviets, as well as the anti-Japanese government which we advocate, is democratic centralist; they are democratic but also centralist, and the two are in contradiction and unity because, under certain conditions, they have identity. The proletarian democratic dictatorship in the Soviet Union, and our democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants of the last decade, are democratic toward the revolutionary classes; they are also dictatorial (or despotic) toward counter-revolutionary classes. There is identity between the two extremes of these opposites.

The resting and training of troops is at the same time a condition for victory in battle; "to train troops for a thousand days" in order to "use them for one morning." To separate and advance is at the same time a condition for a combined attack (develop to attack jointly); retreat and defence, are at the same time in order to counter-attack and take the offensive (retreat to advance, and defend to attack). There is no other reason for being devious than it is the most effective method of wiping out the enemy (be devious to be direct); in order to succeed in the west, make a thrust towards the east (cause an uproar in the east, and strike in the west). Divide the soldiers to win over the masses, in order to facilitate centralization to wipe out the enemy; centralize to wipe out the enemy, in order to facilitate the division of the soldiers to win over the masses. In order to carry out orders decisively, flexible freedoms need to be allowed under a unified scheme; the strict implementation of discipline requires the development of conscious initiative; the statement of individual interest is permissible, but in the end these must be subordinated to the group decision; work at the front is important, but work at the rear cannot be discarded or ignored; if one's health is poor one must think of convalescence, but in times of urgency, one also must think of sacrifice; everybody wants life to be easy, but when economic difficulties arise, one has to suffer; military training is important, and without it we could not smash the enemy (p. 101), but political work is also of importance for without it we would be defeated; the abundant experience of the old soldiers and cadres is worthwhile and valuable, but if there are no new soldiers and cadres, the war and our work cannot be continued; courage is important, but there must be a stratagem; although Zhang Fei was all right, he was after all not as good as Zhao Zilong*; the part of the work which we lead is important, but that part led by others and the entire work is also important if not more important; small group mentality is incorrect, and when one's own opinion and that of the group or higher authorities is in contradiction, one's opinion can and should be explained; it is, however, impermissible to freely express that opinion to any other members at a time when the group or higher authorities have not yet given approval, still less to instigate the subordinate members to oppose the higher authorities; the discipline of the minority subordinating itself to the majority, and the lower level subordinating itself to the higher level, is the minimum discipline of the Communist Party and the Red Army. (SW, Vol. I, pp. 339-40.)

(V) (p. 105) So that this point may be clearly understood, we again utilize as examples the relationship between life and death, and the relationship between labour and capital.

Within an organism, the death of old cells is the precondition for the production of new cells, and is the precondition for the process of life. The two

*Characters from the *Sanguo zhi yanyi*.

contradictory aspects of life and death are united within an organism, and also change into each other; live cells change into dead cells, and dead cells change into live cells (live cells are regenerated (*tuotai*) from dead cells). But this unity of life and death, their coexistence within an organism, are conditional, temporary, and relative. However, from start to finish, the incompatibility of life and death, their mutual rejection, struggle, negation, and transformation, are unconditional, eternal and absolute. The absoluteness of struggle is indicated by live elements within an organism ceaselessly triumphing over dead elements and moreover controlling the dead elements. Under given conditions life changes into death and death into life; such conditions allow an identity between life and death, and enables them to change into each other. Due to the mutual struggle of these two contradictory entities, life and death, life is inevitably transformed into death and death is inevitably transformed into life. This inevitability is unconditional and absolute. From this it can be seen that there must at a certain stage in development be a certain condition of temperature and environment etc., for life and death to change from one to the other, and for there to be an identity between them. This is one problem. The reasons for the so-called temporariness and relativity of life and death, that is, where the conditions do not change and are unable to lengthen life or death, are to be found in the struggle, negation, and mutual rejection between the two. This situation is eternal and absolute. This is the other problem.

The proletariat produces surplus value for the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat's labour power. This is a unified process which determines the survival of capitalism. Labour and capital are each a condition for the other's existence. However, this condition has (p. 106) a given limit, and capitalist development must remain within this given limit; if it is exceeded, ruptures emerge in the unified process, and a socialist revolution appears. These ruptures emerge abruptly, but also emerge gradually in that preparations for their emergence commence from the day the two classes come into existence; the struggle of both sides is continual, and it is this which lays the ground for a sudden change. From this it can be seen that the coexistence of the two classes is preserved as a result of given conditions; this coexistence under given conditions produces a unity or identity between the two classes. Under given conditions the two classes also change from one to the other, such that the exploiters change into the exploited and the exploited change into the exploiters, and capitalist society is transformed into a socialist society. The two contradictory entities have an identity under given conditions. This is one problem. The two sides are in constant struggle. There is struggle within an entity, and especially the struggle of revolution. This unavoidable condition is unconditional, absolute and inevitable. This is the other problem.

In identity there is struggle. To quote Lenin, "... there is an absolute in the relative." Because of this, the unity of opposites is itself a manifestation or an element of the struggle of contradictions. This is our conclusion with regard to this problem.

According to this conclusion, it is perfectly evident whether or not the so-called theories of class harmony and the unity of ideology still have any standing. The theory of international class harmony becomes the opportunism of the workers' movements in every country, and they have no other function than to simply serve as the running dogs of the bourgeoisie. China too has a so-called theory of class harmony, but this is a tune sung by bourgeois reformism. It has no other purpose than specifically to swindle the proletariat so that it will

remain forever the slave of the bourgeoisie. The meaningless *clichés* of the so-called theory of the unity of ideology (p. 107), directly or indirectly depend on the nonsense spewed out by officialdom that it is "the learned opinion of the scholars." Its purpose is nothing but the suppression of the truth, and the obstruction of the progress of the revolution. True scientific theory is the law of the unity of opposites of materialist dialectics, and not these other melodies. (SW, Vol. I, p. 343.)

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY
THE EASTERN PRESS LTD.
OF LONDON AND READING
